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THE NI NEW INTERNATIONALIST

MONTHLY UK £1.90 AUS. $4.75 AOTEAROA/NZ $4.00 CANADA/US $3.50 ◆ THE PEOPLE, THE IDEAS, THE ACTION IN THE FIGHT FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT

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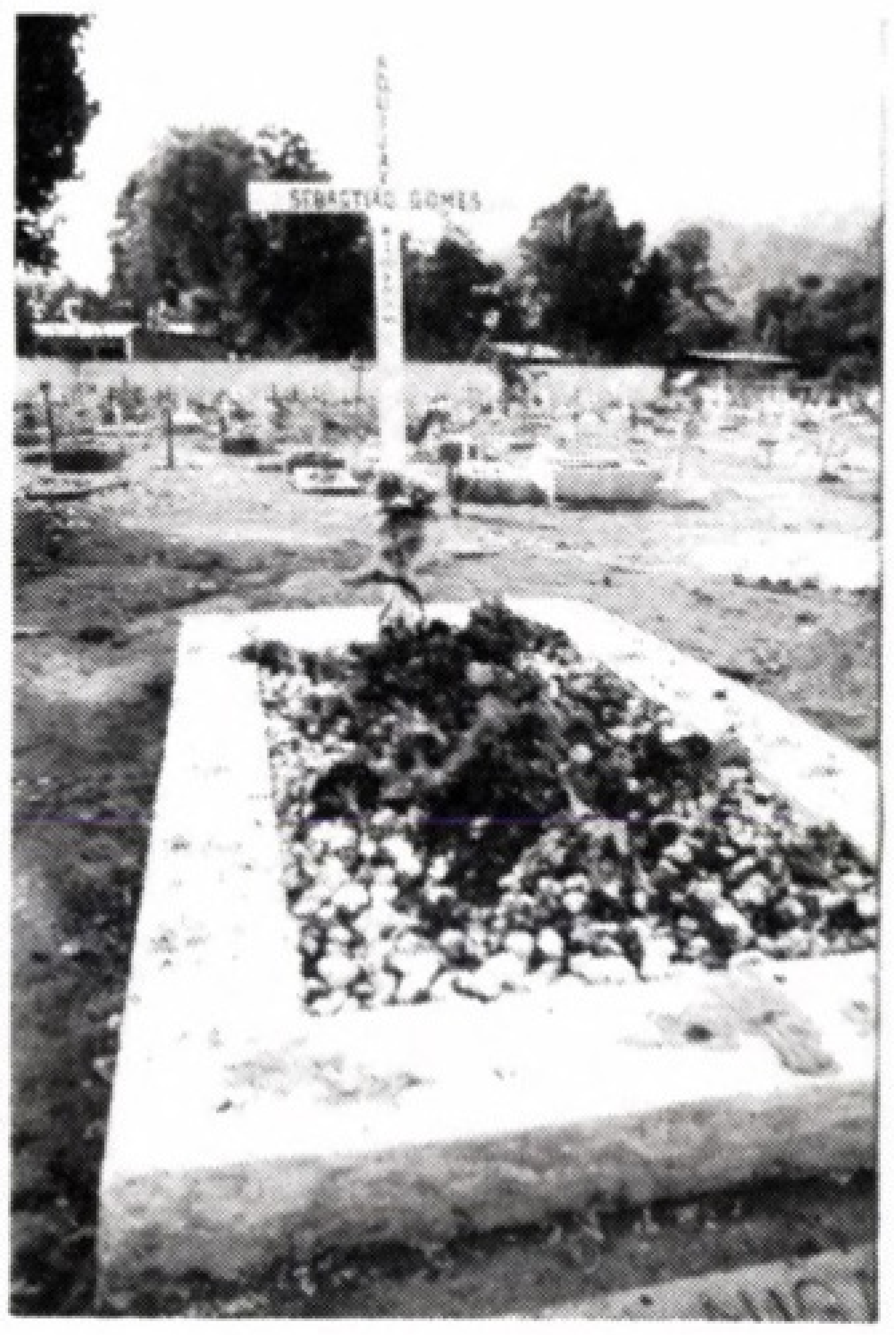

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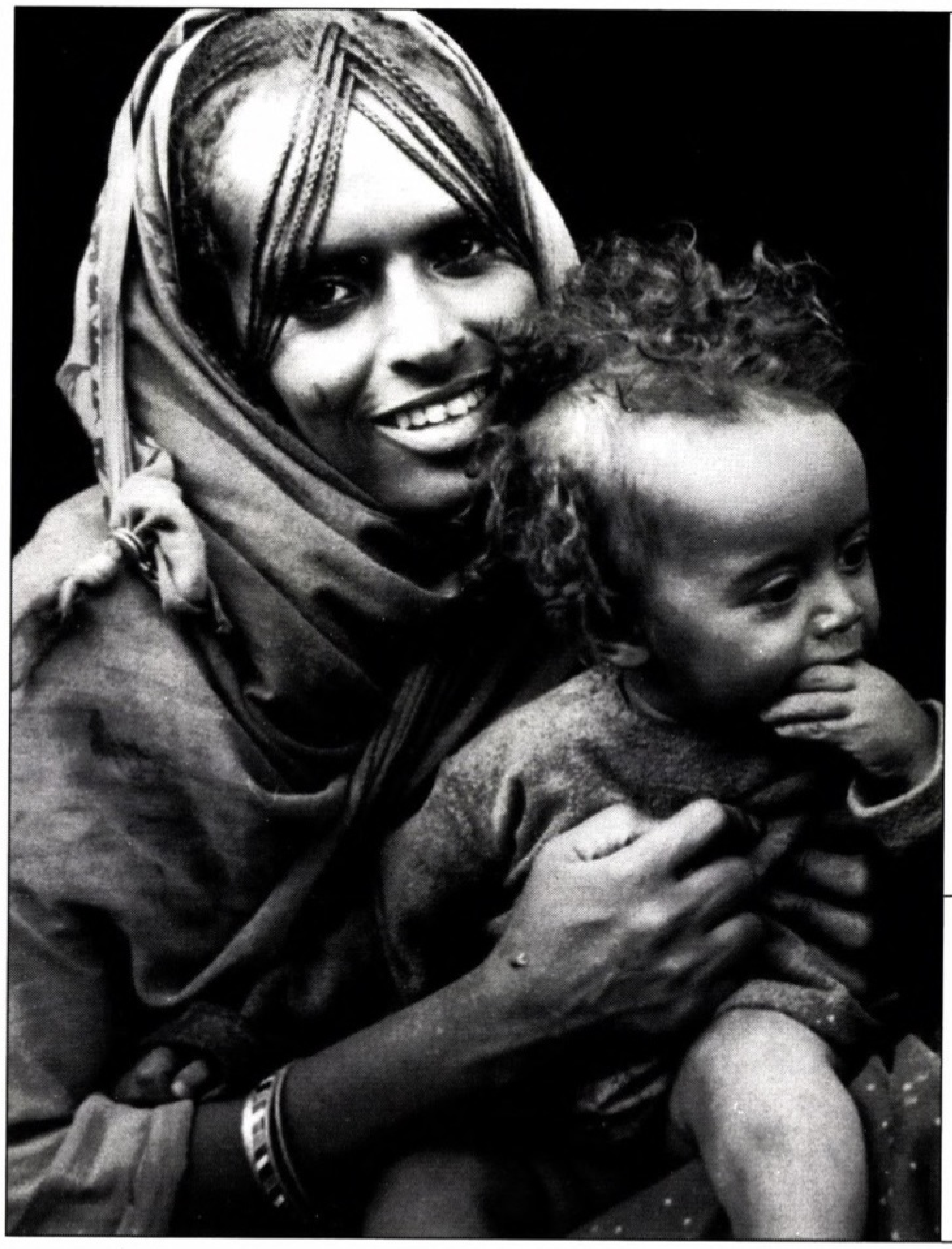

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MAGAZINE DESIGNED BY **ALAN HUGHES.**

THIS MONTH'S **THEME**

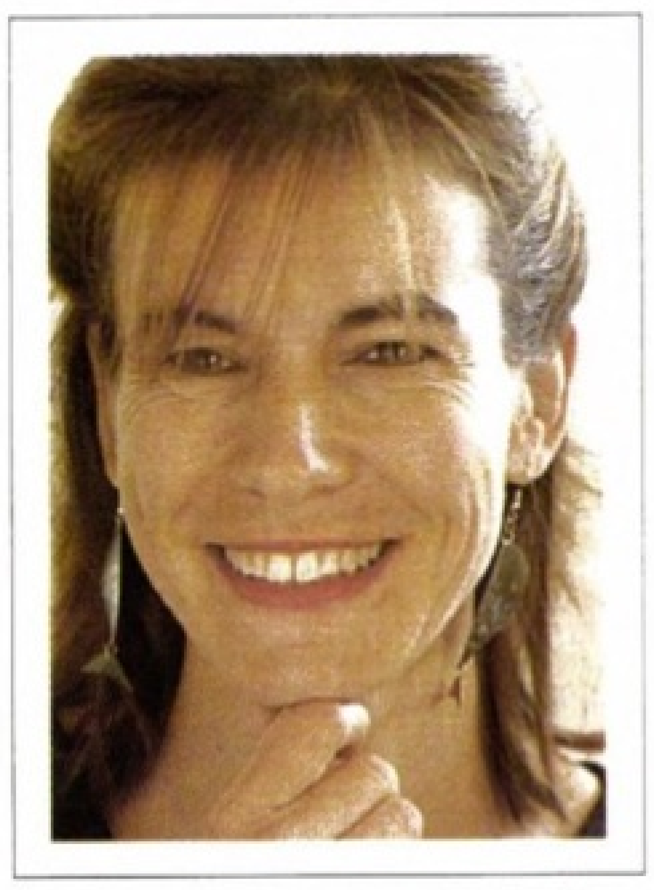
Prostitution

FROM THIS MONTH'S **EDITOR**

PRODUCING this magazine has been full of bizarre experiences. Like sitting at my desk reading some rather explicit material while several of my colleagues grovelled on the floor with life-size pink plastic dummies. No, it wasn't part of my research. They were quite coincidentally taking part in a First Aid course.

Then there were the problems with the photo agencies. True, I was asking for something difficult. I didn't want the normal run-of-the-mill prostitution pictures. I wanted prostitutes as people, not as victims or 'happy hookers'.

The first agency didn't stock photos of prostitutes on principle, because they were concerned about the exploitation angle. The second wouldn't allow me to use photographs of families in case I offended someone's sensibilities. And the third had had legal problems with some photos they'd used of women in fur coats in a red-light district, who had been labelled as prostitutes when they weren't. So they only stocked photos of prostitutes who were in a state of undress or otherwise clearly demarcated as prostitutes.



In the end, with the assistance of helpful and interested women researchers at the various agencies, I found what I wanted. I also met with great enthusiasm from the various female illustrators and cartoonists that I commissioned, who came up with superb ideas and vibrant, colourful pictures. Sisterhood is global after all.

It proved to be less so on the issue of what angle I should take in the magazine. Everyone – male and female – had an opinion that they felt I should air, and usually a ribald comment to go with it. I felt the **NI** should be listening to prostitutes themselves. If possible they should write most of the magazine. But I also knew that by doing this I would alienate a whole range of other people. As a feminist, I would get flack from feminists. Moralists wouldn't like it; nor would some campaigners. I wasn't sure what my mum would think either.

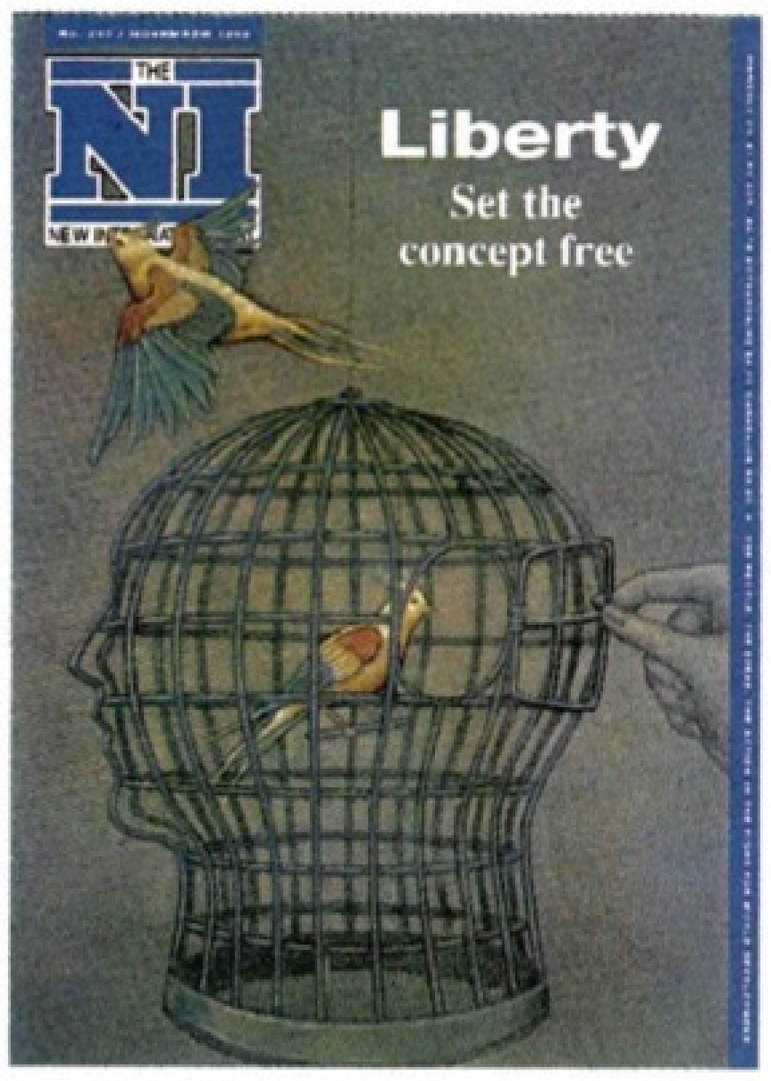
In the end I decided that I would just have to get on with it. I'd have to annoy somebody whatever I did. But I'll be clearer about what I'm taking on board next time I do a magazine that has anything to do with sex. And I'm not sure I'm ever going to be able to do that First Aid course...

Nikki van der Gaag

Nikki van der Gaag
for the ***New Internationalist*** *Co-operative*

The **New Internationalist** welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address is inside the front cover.

Vive la différence!



The article 'Cephu's Choice' by Nancy Scheper-Hughes (**NI 249**) was a first for **NI** – an article which was neither condescending nor paternalistic to Third World peoples, but objectively considered their values as if they just might be a viable alternative to those of the **NI**. It is nice, for once, not to be looked at as 'potentially' equal if we successfully adopt your values and the West's technology.

I salute the trend and hope it doesn't suffer from infant mortality.

Mtumiki Njira
Limbe, Malawi

Political hi-jack

I agree with Nina Silver (**NI 249**) that 'the essence of political correctness is genuine effort for others'. However, I still have difficulty with the term 'political correctness' itself which is inherently contradictory and hence meaningless.

If a thing is 'political' there are at least two ways of looking at it or thinking about it. If a thing is 'correct' it can be only right or wrong with no two ways of looking at it. Therefore to be politically correct is impossible and one can only be politically acceptable or not, which depends on one's point of view.

Another problem with this phrase is the use of the word 'correctness', which has led to it being hijacked by extremists and the futile over-dramatization of incidents without much significance, as Nina Silver mentions in her article.

It is unfortunate that an idea born out of 'genuine respect for others' should be saddled with a label which can be such a handicap. What is actually needed is a form of sensitive and aware liberation; 'political awareness', perhaps.

Michael Foster
Sheffield, UK

Fantasy world

I feel I must write in response to Tim Young's letter (**NI 249**), as he appears to be living in a free-market fantasy world.

It is true that, by shifting investment from higher- to lower-wage countries, transnational corporations (TNCs) exert downward pressure on wages in the wealthier countries. However, this pressure is not exerted on all wages, but only on the lowest, since it is only the unskilled sections of the manufacturing process that are relocated in this way.

The idea that these same corporations, by demanding more 'Third World' labour, will place upward pressure on wages in poorer nations is, unfortunately, little more than farce. There is some evidence to suggest that, when the 'industrial reserve army' has been used workers may be able to unionize and push for higher wages. But – as the workers of the newly-industrialized economies of South-East Asia are now finding out – capitalists faced with unionized labour and rising wage bills don't hang around for long. Instead, TNCs are moving away from such countries and into more easily exploitable territories in Africa, Central America and even Eastern Europe.

I suggest that Mr Young looks a little more carefully at the activities and motives of TNCs before he sings their praises again.

Steve Rolfe
Winchester, UK

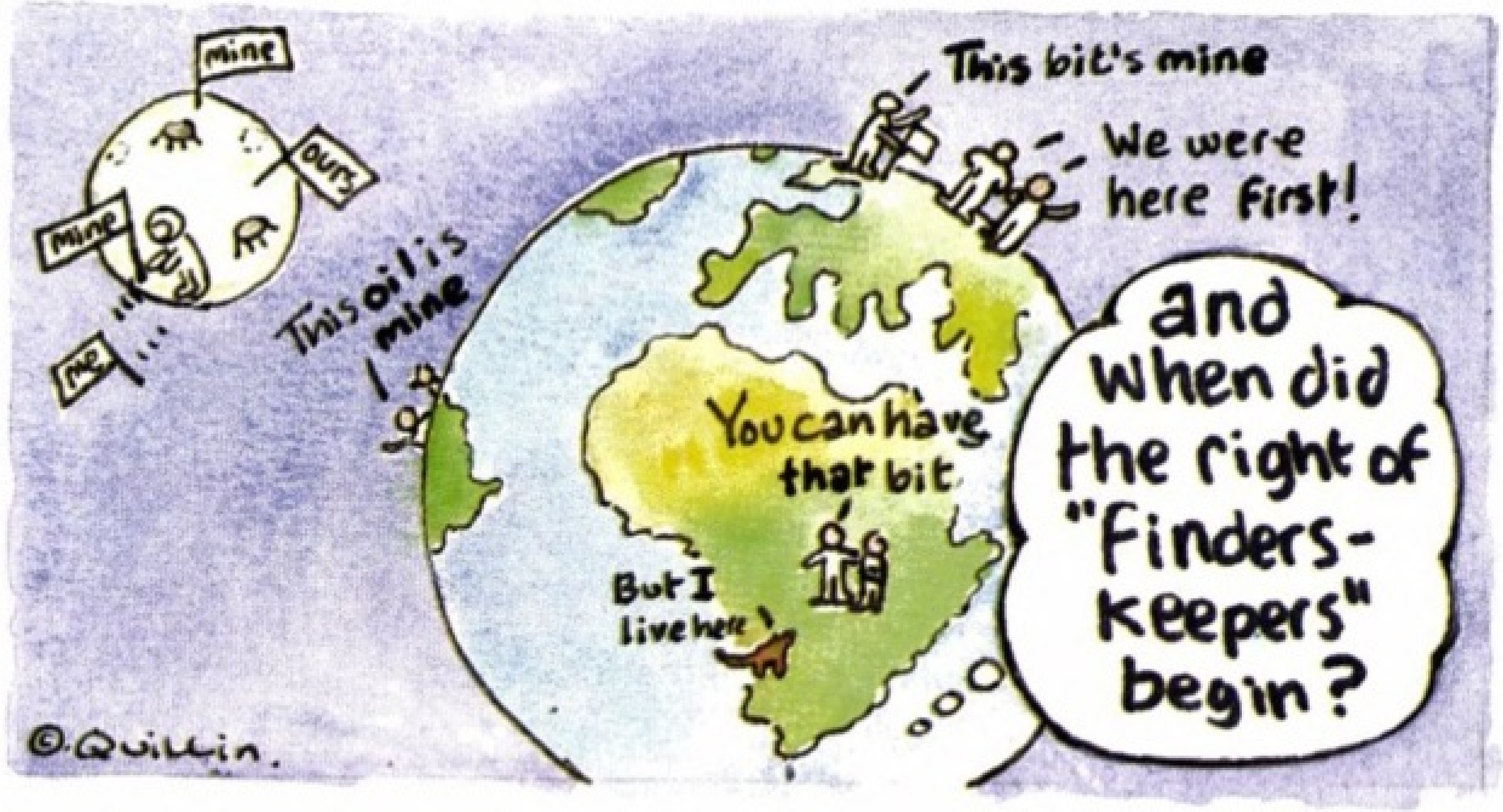
Massive fraud

Your issue on the uses and abuses of history (**NI 247**) made some very important points. But perhaps the most recent and massive historical fraud is that invented by South Africa's apartheid regime to give false credibility to its 'homelands' policy, and to apartheid itself. A fraud with plenty of life to it still.

Briefly, to 'justify' apartheid's division of land and mineral riches on the basis of 35 times more for whites, per person, than for blacks, enormous lies were created. Although blacks were known to have settled in much of South Africa many centuries before the whites, Pretoria's huge propaganda effort for 40 years claimed that 'black and white arrived almost simultaneously', and that the blacks only ever settled 13.7 per cent of South Africa. In fact, carbon-dating long ago proved that they had settled more than half the country before the whites arrived in 1652.

This fraud is still used to class nine million black South Africans as 'aliens' in their own country.

Len Clarke
Middlesex, UK



VIV QUILLIN

Surprising gap

I was surprised to find no reference to the contribution of 'Subaltern School' in your issue on history (**NI 247**). Using Gramsci's concept of Subaltern, this genre of doing 'history from below' calls for making 'people' the central focus. This kind of history is being used mainly in the context of South Asian history, but I believe it has wider application elsewhere. Your readers might find Ranjit Guha and Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford University Press, 1988) a useful introductory text.

S M Shamsul Alam
Ashland, Oregon, US

Burma's torment

Richard Ehrlich's Country Profile on Burma (**NI 248**) is somewhat misleading.

The 'consumer society' consists of but a fortunate few supported by the huge military. The junta 'renounced' socialism but never funded social programs to begin with, nor did it relinquish any control over business.

The economy, institutions and infrastructure are all harnessed for army purposes. Hence the role of oil firms, who are even now building a gas pipeline that will destroy Burma's last intact rainforest and pave the way for more army attacks.

The report scarcely scratches the surface of Burma's torment and blatant criminality. A cultured society is reduced to cannon fodder; civilians are subject to systematic robbery, rape, torture, murder, forced relocation or slavery. Burma's heroin economy dwarfs all other sources worldwide, and spawns rampant addiction and the explosive growth of AIDS.

The Burmese endure ongoing betrayal by Western governments, who show little interest in toppling a pro-business regime. Yet the junta is so economically incompetent that even half-hearted sanctions would force it to its knees.

With this in mind, several Burmese, American and Canadian organizations have just formed the Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma. Only a people-driven, South-Africa-style campaign can free Burma's imprisoned leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her long-suffering followers.

Terry Cotham
Ottawa, Canada

Only child

I am writing a book about only children, to be published by Virago in 1995. I want to gather the experiences and thoughts of a wide range of people who have only one child.

If you would be prepared to answer a short questionnaire, please send your name and address to me at 15 Matcham Road, London E11 3LE.

Ros Kane
London, UK

Big brother's work

Members of the Co-op should stop and meditate before putting pen to paper. Are they committing their own thoughts, or have they been planted there by the media? Constant references to democracy and the free market require that the meanings be re-examined. We don't live in either.

There seems to be a general tendency on the part of vociferous feminists to lump all men together as having only one ambition – to do everything to disadvantage women.

Surely we have enough problems overcoming the injustices that the plutocracy, male and female, are imposing on us? We should be combining to unseat them, instead of doing their dirty work by squabbling over words.

So next time you feel like taking it out on other human beings, remember that you might be doing big brother and sister's work for them.

Patrick Crawley
Basingstoke, UK

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the NI.

Letter from Lagos

No hair for Josie

Elizabeth Obadina reports on the raw deal that widows get in Nigeria.

MY friend Josie had the most beautiful waist-long black hair imaginable. But that was a year ago, before armed robbers cut short the life of her young husband. Josie, a part-Yoruba from the west of Nigeria, had married an Igbo, from the east. According to Igbo custom the widow must shave her head after her husband's burial. Josie and her husband were thoroughly Westernized Nigerians. Out of pity her husband's people let her off lightly.

ILLUSTRATION: MIRIAM McCURDY

She told me that she believed the old village women were just going to take a symbolic snip of hair which wouldn't show. But just as she thought they were untying her pony-tail she heard a tremendous 'scrunch' and her hair, still tied up, was chopped off. They stopped short of shaving her bald. She left her appalled mother-in-law and sister-in-law, who had no more anticipated the savage cut than she had, and high-tailed it out of the village and back to Lagos.

Her first call was to the hairdresser to have her ragged bob recut into a style her husband would never have recognized.

But Josie ranks among the luckier of Nigerian widows. She wasn't forced to wear black for a year, not wash for a month, drink the water used to bathe her husband's corpse, maintain a dusk-to-dawn curfew or submit to any other distressing practices often inflicted upon widows in the name of tradition. She was not inherited by her husband's brother or nephews. Nor did her husband's family storm the family home to make away with the couple's property. Her worst experience was to arrive home after the harrowing three-day funeral to discover that the electricity had been cut for three days leaving her freezer in a stinking mess.

Well provided-for and with supportive in-laws, she now has 'only' to cope with raising her two baby daughters by herself – and with her grief. Most Nigerian widows have very much more to bear.

Just over a year ago a military transport plane carrying around 200 officers and schoolchildren dropped from the skies into an inner-city swamp. Everyone on board died a horrible death as the plane became entombed in the ooze.

Nigeria's military rulers promised the victims' families heaven on earth.

A year later the widows of the officers publicly challenged the military to make good their promises. They said they had been forgotten; that only well-connected relatives of the victims had managed to receive any compensation. Compensation hadn't reached the immediate families of the deceased. They said their children were yet to receive the promised bursaries for their education. The army waded into the controversy.

With some truth, the army maintained that compensation had been paid to the officers' next-of-kin. It was just that very few of the men had named their wives as next-of-kin.

In Nigeria it is an unusual man who declares his wife to be next-of-kin. Those who do, and let it become known, endure serious pestering from relatives who attempt to convince him that he is courting death through poisoning at the hands of a wife intent on realizing her inheritance.

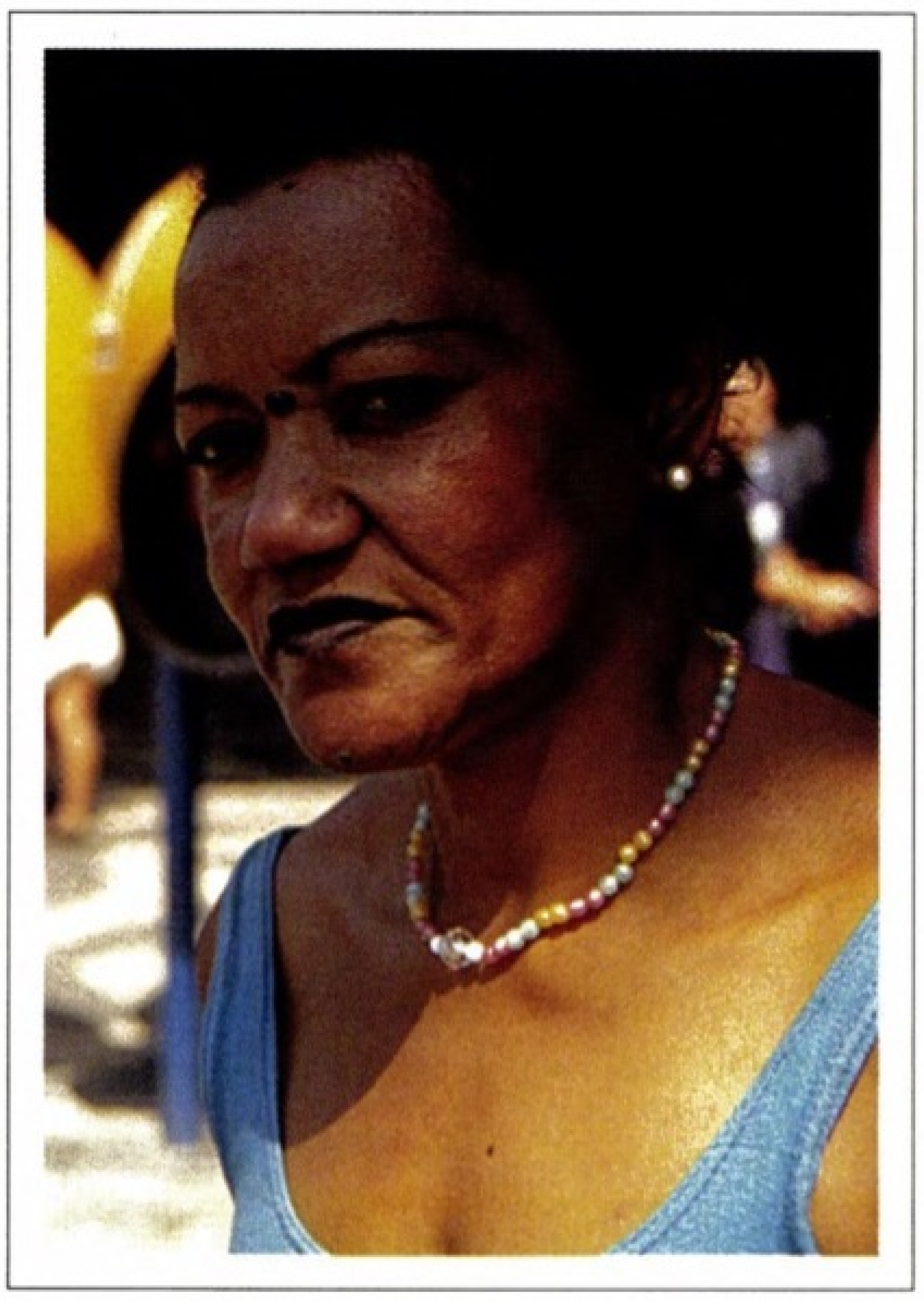
Under most customary laws the wife cannot inherit land or property. Under Islamic law the wife is entitled to only a quarter of her husband's estate. Under common law, inherited from the British, everything depends on whether the man has made a will or not. Most don't. If they die intestate many widows will opt for the crumbs they can grab from the customary carve-up of the man's estate, knowing that the legal fees and bribes necessary to secure their just inheritance would probably swallow it entirely.

There was one widow I knew who left her wealthy husband's body to lie for months on ice. There had been no love lost between them as he had taken younger wives in later years leaving her unhappy and hard-up, but with the family house as a roof over her head. 'Let him rot there,' had been her response when charged with the responsibility of burying him. 'He chose to die without leaving a will. This is his house and his people are trying every day to throw me out. His bastard children are claiming what should belong to my children. And you tell me, my sister – what money do I have to bribe the judge to rule that we get our fair share? No, let his brothers and sisters bury him. I'm keeping my money for living.' ■

Elizabeth Obadina is a freelance writer and journalist living in Lagos.

Prostitution

Soliciting for change



JENNY MATTHEWS / NETWORK

Everyone has something to say about prostitution. Feminists, moralists, radicals, pragmatists all have pronouncements to make. ***Nikki van der Gaag*** *suggests we try listening to what prostitutes have to say.*

THE interior of the building was like something out of hell; long corridors which appeared to lead nowhere, mirror-panelled lobbies painted black, and windowless conference rooms with orange wallpaper and appalling acoustics. In short, it was not a place to put me at ease. And I felt distinctly uneasy. I had spent ages wondering what to wear; if I wore my short black skirt, would I be taken for a prostitute? If I wore leggings and a jumper, would I stick out like a sore appendage as the only 'media' person invited?

In the event, I compromised on a smart skirt and jacket. I had no need to worry. Inside the conference room I found the strangest confabulation: a white-haired woman in a dog-collar, two stuffed shirts from the Vice Squad; several tired health workers and a few lawyers. Next to a brothel owner sat a woman from the Salvation Army. And among them all, a pride of prostitutes.

We had clearly all come here with different agendas. But we had a common aim: to work out in detail what abolishing the laws on adult prostitution would mean.

So what would it mean, in simple, practical terms? It would improve working conditions, health and safety for prostitutes. They could work together in a more organized way; two or three women could rent a flat to work from without being accused of brothel-keeping. Women could carry condoms without fear that they could be used as evidence, thus reducing the risk of sexually-transmitted infections. And, finally, prostitutes could negotiate more safely with clients knowing that the police would protect them as citizens rather than harass them as outcasts. All this would mean that prostitutes, like any other workers, could have greater control over the economic exchange.

But it will take more than decriminalization to remove the complex barrage of prejudices facing all prostitutes, everywhere. A registered prostitute in a legal brothel in Ankara, Turkey, comments: 'As soon as society realizes that you are a prostitute, society will have nothing to do with you. You are cut off completely, you are not treated as human, you are excommunicated from society.'[1]

Of course, like any other oppressed group, prostitutes have different and some-

HOMER SYKES / NETWORK

Knowing thyself: prostitutes are now challenging 'expert' opinion about their profession.

times conflicting voices and experiences. Those who sell sex are as diverse as sex itself. Most are female, some are male. Most are heterosexual, many are lesbian or gay. Some see prostitution as a personal tragedy; others have chosen it freely. Some of the voices are louder than others; some are not heard at all. But they all oppose the stigma and the laws that pin them down.

Most of the time their voices are drowned out by the babble of those with more power in society. Loudest in the chorus is the voice of patriarchy, often linked to that of religion. That patriarchal voice says that sex outside marriage is immoral and that the women who sell sex are 'fallen'. This makes it easy to lay blame on the prostitute and not the client. For example, prostitutes have always been blamed for spreading sexually-transmitted diseases. No doubt a higher incidence of intercourse does raise the stakes. But who is doing the spreading? The *New York Times* on 5 November 1987 carried the following story:

'The disease appears to have entered the Philippines, in many cases through prostitutes who have had contact with servicemen near two large American bases, the doctors said'.[2]

Note the bias. Although it must clearly have been the servicemen who brought in the disease and then spread it by having sex with prostitutes, it is the prostitutes who are blamed.

This patriarchal language echoes across the world. It was there at the Scottish National Party's annual conference, when Andrew Welsh, MP for Angus East and an elder of the Church of Scotland, argued against a motion for the decriminalization of adult prostitution in Scotland. He urged members to study the scriptures and said that 'anyone in favour had not even begun to understand the nature of human beings, or indeed, of human society'. He feared that if the motion went through, Scotland would be turned into 'the greatest little whorehouse in the European Community'.

Kay Miller, who proposed the decriminalization motion, argued that: 'Prostitutes supply a valuable service and deserve to be accorded the same respect as anyone else in society'. She pointed out that she had worked for 10 years in the defence industry and 'if that isn't classed as immoral earnings, I don't know what is'.

It is in the interests of patriarchy to condemn the selling of sex as immoral at the same time as making full use of the services provided. Such hypocrisy was encapsulated most famously by Shakespeare in King Lear:

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back:
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind
For which thou whip'st her.

The whore was presumably lashed nonetheless. And Kay Miller lost the debate. But before she did, she drove her point home: 'Every last person that has come up here and slated off this motion has been a man. What in the hell's name is wrong with them?' Perhaps the answer lies in their trousers.

Another voice in the chorus is more subtle and complex. It includes US feminists like Catherine McKinnon – who sees sexual objectification as the first step in turning women into objects – and scholars such as Kathleen Barry, an expert on female sexual slavery who has documented

MIKE GOLDWATER / NETWORK

From candlelight to red light: from Uganda (above) to Amsterdam (below), prostitution is as diverse as sex itself.

abuse against women in all its forms. They argue that prostitution is not primarily about economics, but about sexual exploitation. According to Kathleen Barry: 'Free prostitution does not exist, whatever the means of exercising it... prostitution of women [is] always by force... it is a violation of human rights and an outrage to the dignity of women.'[3]

This view is supported by the UN Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, which states that 'prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purposes of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person.'

Kathleen Barry sees all prostitutes as oppressed, but unable by the very nature of their work to recognize that oppression. So she excludes the voices of prostitutes who do not agree with her.

There are many prostitutes who do disagree with her, arguing that they do not believe prostitution to be better or worse than any other kind of work. Norma-Jean Almodavar, an ex-cop who became a prostitute, claims that selling sex is less morally degrading than being part of a corrupt police force. And Eva Rosta, an English prostitute, puts it even more bluntly:

'All work involves selling some part of your body. You might sell your brain, you might sell your back, you might sell your fingers for typewriting. Whatever it is that you do you are selling one part of your body. I choose to sell my body the way I want to and I choose to sell my vagina.' [4]

There are official moves in favour of this viewpoint – even if they would express it somewhat differently. The International Labour Organization, for one, has recognized prostitution as work. Whatever the arguments, prostitution is one of the few ways in which women with no other skills and little education can earn a living. As Emma Goldman, a nineteenth-century activist and feminist pointed out:

'Why waste your life working for a few shillings a week in a scullery, 18 hours a day, when a woman could earn a decent wage by selling her body instead?'

Sometimes it is not a question of a decent wage, but of any wage at all. Take the case of Nsanga, in Zaire. She is 36 and has two children, a five-year-old girl and a boy in primary school. She was deserted by her schoolteacher husband in 1984 when he lost his job – along with 80,000 others – as a result of the structural adjustment package imposed by the IMF.

Nsanga tried many things to earn money. She cooked food for neighbourhood men, she sold uncooked rice in small quantities and dried fish when she could obtain supplies cheaply. These efforts brought in only pennies at a time. She got into debt, and took a lover who made regular support payments. Then she got pregnant and he left. So Nsanga had to take on more partners –'breaking stones' *(kobeta libanga)* as it is called – in order to make a living.[5]

In Nsanga's case, she had no option but to 'break stones'. You might say that the IMF, in this case, was her 'pimp'. And her situation is very common. Wider social and economic factors, combined with patriarchal rules about women's role in society, drive women into prostitution.

The United Nations believes that at least 10 per cent of the world's female population in urban areas earn all, or part, of their living from selling sex. And this is on the increase. War, migration and recession all lead to more people searching for any means of making a living.

So where does prostitution begin and end? The reason we have so much difficulty in coming to terms with the issue is that it involves challenging our own views of sex and possibly even our own sexual mores.

Self-defined 'career' prostitutes, wherever they come from, are the minority. Many people sell sex from time to time, casually, as a way of making money. This applies equally to a teacher in the UK as it does to a trinket-seller in Sri Lanka. So how is a prostitute different from someone else who engages in a sexual transaction? Prostitutes often argue that they are also therapists. Therapy now includes 'sex surrogacy', where substitute female partners help men who lack sexual experience or suffer feelings of inadequacy in bed. Sex surrogates would certainly not see themselves as prostitutes, and yet they are performing a sexual service for money.

Wives too, are part of an economic, social and sexual bargain. In marriage, a man acquires the right to a woman's body and to her labour – for unlimited usage. And here the 'sexual slavery' lobby and the pro-prostitution camp agree at last. Kathleen Barry once again:

'Marriage and prostitution are experi-

JULIO ETCHART / REPORTAGE

ences of individuals but they are also institutions. They are, in fact, the primary institutions through which sex is conveyed and in which female sexual slavery is practised. Sex is purchased through prostitution and legally acquired through marriage.'[6]

She echoes Daniel Defoe's eighteenth-century heroine in his novel *Roxana*, who protests that:

'The very nature of the Marriage-Contract was, in short, nothing but giving up Liberty, Estate, Authority, and everything, to the Man, and the Woman was indeed, a meer Woman ever after, that is to say, a Slave.'

Prostitution and marriage are both ways in which women can look to gain some measure of economic security. In neither case is it guaranteed. The wife may find herself beaten, raped and thrown out; the prostitute too may be raped and battered. In both cases, those who wear the trousers win.

In both cases, too, it is in the interests of patriarchy that wives and prostitutes do not meet, and that prostitutes do not organize among themselves. The fact that prostitution is illegal helps. In France, in the 1820s, the law forbade prostitutes – and other women who might be prostitutes – from 'walking together, standing around the streets, forming groups, taking up the pavements, soliciting passers-by and provoking scandals by their free discourse and indecent dress.'[7]

Today it is still difficult for prostitutes to meet. In order to do so they have to admit publicly what they do and so face possible imprisonment. Dolores French, now well known for her work on prostitutes' rights and for setting up HIRE (Hooking is Real Employment) in Atlanta in the US, wrote of her trepidation when first faced with 'going public' on TV:

'I was already public as a prostitute. The members of Atlanta City Council knew I was a prostitute. The women in HIRE knew I was a prostitute. My friends knew I was a prostitute. And anyone who had heard me speak knew I was a prostitute. But that was quite different from going on national television and announcing to the world – and to my parents – that I was a prostitute. Once I did the Donahue show, I would never be able to get a regular job again, ever.'[2]

Prostitutes in countries of the South risk not only stigma and loss of employment, but violence and even death when they try to speak. Take this example from the Philippines:

'In March 1986, the women in a bar outside Olongapo went on strike...The bar owner was American. On Palm Sunday of that year, at about 5.00am, one of the organizers was shot in the head and killed. The killer was caught: he had been hired by the bar owner, who was already out of the country. The strike continued...'[8]

The women won – but at a high price. In many parts of the world today prostitutes are speaking out – and beginning to be heard, at last. In Brazil, Britain, Thailand and the US, prostitutes – both men and women – are meeting and organizing. Some of them held an international 'Whores Congress', reclaiming the word 'whore' as lesbians had reclaimed the word 'dyke'.

The conference that I went to was part of that growing and broad-based movement. It was not solely a prostitutes' conference, nor a feminists', lawyers' or police conference. It was attended by people from all sectors of society out of recognition that for necessary change to occur in the law on prostitution there needs to be a willingness to bridge the age-old stigmas that divide us all. We need to listen to the voices of prostitutes.

I left the hotel no longer worrying that I might be taken for a whore, but hoping that I would not feel it mattered if I were. ■

The professional

I'VE worked as a waitress. I've worked as a mother. I have one kid who is 18 now; a great kid. I've worked as a stripper. I guess I haven't had many traditional-type straight jobs.

I started off as a stripper when I was a teenager. When I was 24 years old I stopped. I got really sick and tired of it. I ended up on welfare for two months and I didn't want to do that. I met these two friends who were prostituting themselves and doing very well at it, so I asked them all about it.

I thought it was a major step. It was very different from stripping and I wasn't sure that I was going to like it. All this programming that prostitution was a terrible thing. I did it with a heavy heart.

But after I'd turned two or three dates all I thought was 'how could you have been so stupid not to do this before? How could you let your stupid little suburban small-town morality get in the way of a wonderful way of making a living? You set your own hours, you make a lot of money, and you don't give most of it back to the government in taxes.'

I was really terrified of getting AIDS when we first started hearing about it from the media. But my clientèle kept insisting it was a gay disease and they didn't want to use condoms since they were paying over $100. So I went out on the street, because everybody on the street thought they were getting a dirty girl so there was no problem wearing condoms. Eventually there was more press about AIDS and I got my clientèle back. I lost a third, but the rest got up to using condoms, so that was fine.

What it's about is that it's OK to be a whore. You can be a wonderful person while you're being a whore. There's no such thing as a 24-hour whore. Prostitutes have kids, gardens, pets. People only think of you as a whore. I'm studying at university to be a veterinarian. But all people can think about is that I suck dicks. They think a prostitute is incapable of love, of a relationship.

Contrary to popular belief a guy coming to see you for an hour doesn't call the shots. I call the shots. No unsafe sex. If someone comes in and I feel weird about them, I don't see them. I screen them on the telephone answering machine. It weeds out a lot of what we call the 'cluch'. You can tell a lot by their tone of voice.

ILLUSTRATION: CLIVE OFFLEY

My girlfriend and I have been together for eight years. We do a two-girl show. The guy watches and can join in. We get to charge more money since there's two of us. My girlfriend's an ex-boxer and I'm pretty good with a knife. I haven't advertised for about five years. I still have three regular guys; one I see weekly; one I see monthly and one I see every two or three months.

Some women will say to me: 'I don't know how you put up with guys for a whole hour'. But ten minutes of that hour is sex; the other 50 minutes is talk. We talk politics, art. I always read at least one of the daily newspapers. I listen to public radio. It doesn't take much to be a good conversationalist. I just prod them a little. They'll do all the talking. I just do all the old femme tricks. It's a lot better than getting up early to go to an office and coming home late.

The people who say that prostitution is the epitome of the patriarchy are well meaning but misguided. They have a problem with sex. In order for women to be truly free sexually they have to have the right to say 'no' and also to say 'yes' – but on their terms. It's not about sex. It's about power. Women become prostitutes because they decide to go for the best deal – for the amount of time they put in the money is good. It's right up there with being a lawyer.

Valerie Scott was interviewed by Toronto freelancer **Erica Simmons**.

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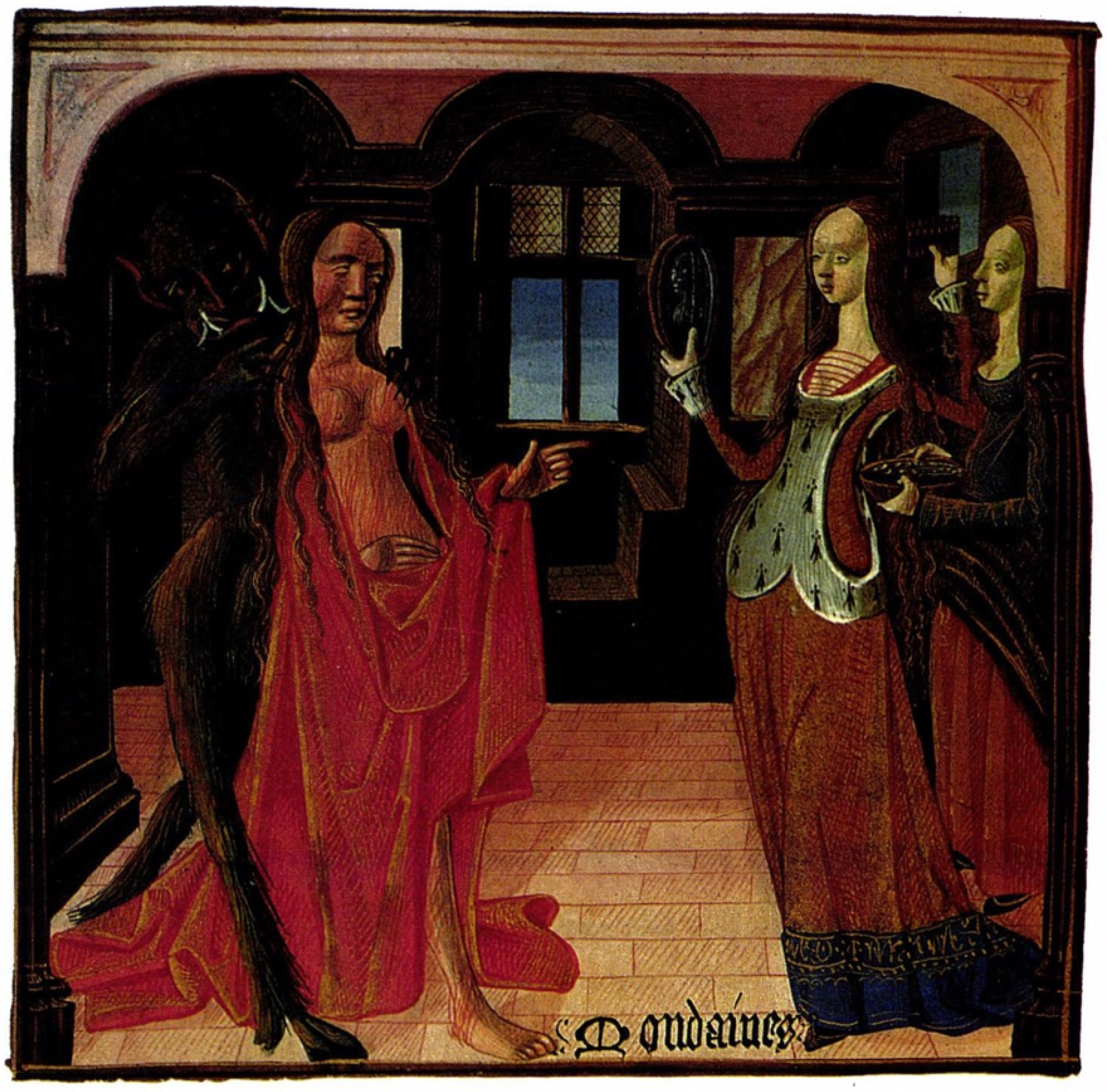


The Two Conditions of the World (anonymous, 15th Century).

The **whore,** her **stigma,** the **punter** and his **wife**

How did the stigma against prostitutes come about? ***Nickie Roberts*** *delves into some hidden history – and comes up with challenging proposals for the future.*

A PROSTITUTE is raped by a client. She does not bother to report the crime to the police, because in their eyes the rape of a hooker isn't a crime: 'You're a whore, what do you expect?' is their attitude.

A teenage prostitute is murdered by a serial killer, who then goes on to kill a young student. Only after a 'respectable' woman is killed is there a public outcry. And at the killer's trial, the prosecution lawyer comments that the saddest aspect of the case is the fact that some victims were not prostitutes.

A New York police chief makes the following comments when being interviewed about the murder of a Puerto Rican streetwalker: 'I think there's something juicy about a prostitute getting killed. Some of them are young and attractive, and I've seen how some cops act around them. It's maybe a little more exciting.'

In the three instances above we see the whore-stigma operating at its most blatant, enshrined and even eroticized by serial killers, lawmakers and a gullible, apathetic public. Prostitutes experience the whore stigma on a daily basis, in the denial of their human rights by the police and the legal establishment. This includes harassment, illegal arrests, state pimping in the form of fines (the only way in which a woman can pay court fines is by going straight back on the beat), and imprisonment.

To grasp both how the whore-stigma came about, and how it continues to serve patriarchal interests, it is necessary to go back to the transition of society from matriarchy to patriarchy – a transition ignored by most male-oriented history. Before then, women had been free to make their own sexual choices. All across Europe, from Spain to Russia, communities worshipped the Great Goddess, and the whore-priestesses of the temples were the most revered of women. Evidence from Stone Age art confirms the central position of women. From as far back as the Gravettian-Aurignacian cultures of the Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age (around 25,000 BC onwards), nearly all the surviving sculptures and statues are of women. In some cultures – the Aurignacians of the Eastern steppes, for example – men are not represented at all. These female representations went far beyond the simplistic 'fertility figures' beloved of male pre-historians, although it is clear that an aspect of the sacred came from the fact that no-one knew how procreation came about. The

Goddess was affirmed in her three aspects as creator, preserver and destroyer of life. Inscribed on an ancient Sumerian clay tablet are the words of the goddess Ishtar: 'A Prostitute compassionate am I'. The whore-priestess channelled her creative energy into the material world.

Then, around 2000 BC, all this was shattered. Tribes of warlike, male-dominated nomads began to invade matriarchal territories. The whore-priestesses were ousted from the temples and replaced by male priests. The first civilizations of the historical era were born out of this upheaval in Mesopotamia (mostly in what is now Iraq) and Egypt. As the power of male religious and political institutions grew, so too did the patriarchal form of marriage, in which the women and children were chattels. The division of women into the domesticated wife – Good Woman – and the rebellious whore – Bad Girl – came about.

'She is loud and stubborn,' wrote the Old Testament prophets. 'Her feet abide not in her house; now she is without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.' *Proverbs 7:11-12.*

Thus wrote the Levite warrior-priests who invaded and settled the fertile and goddess-worshipping land of Canaan sometime around 1300 BC. Hebrew teaching developed the notion that women's sexual autonomy was the root of all evil; that because of what happened in the Garden of Eden, womankind's lot was to be suffering, shame and repentance, for all time. The other major patriarchal religions that followed – Christianity and Islam – recognized the devastating impact of the whore stigma in dividing and ruling women, and took it up enthusiastically, slotting it into their own preferred versions of the anti-woman mythology.

During the latter part of the fourteenth and during the fifteenth century, the Church had financial interests in brothels, while at the same time condemning prostitution. Businessmen too, were making fat profits from ownership of brothels – and control of the workers in them. In Avignon, in France, for example, whores cloistered in the state brothel were forbidden to walk the streets at any time in case they decided to do a little moonlighting. The brothel regulations stated that:

'If a girl has thus offended, and persists in her offence... then the Claviger, or Chief of the Beadles, shall lead her through the city by Beat of Drum, a red knot hanging from her Shoulder, back to the Brothel, and shall prohibit her from walking any more, under the Penalty of being lash'd privately for the first offence, and of being whipp'd publicly and being turned out of the House for the Second.'

Prostitutes did protest – for instance, in 1387 the whores of Chateauneuf-Calcernier occupied the church pew of the town's royal officer. Respectable citizens were so outraged that they broke up the pew.

Historically, the stigmatizing of female sexual autonomy has fettered women's sexuality to patriarchy's (and latterly, capitalism's) specific requirements. Through marriage and woman's monogamy, wealthy men can safely claim ownership of their male offspring and hand down their wealth and power directly through the line. At the same time, women remain divided from each other, and therefore weakened as a group. This in turn ensures that middle-class men enjoy the wifely support that provides them with the time and the space in which to pursue their better-paid careers, while at the same time having access to the sexual services of a vast array of working-class whores, a casual harem of both sexes.

The whore-stigma ensures that the Good Woman and the Bad Girl stick to their separate spheres. For what might happen if it were suddenly OK for housewives and hookers to get together?

A friend of mine, a working prostitute, comments: 'I think a lot of men are afraid that if their wives cottoned on to how much we make in this business, they wouldn't put up with the old man anymore. I've had clients say as much. It's the money – women don't have the money to get out of a boring marriage, or whatever, and these men know it. It's how they keep 'em down.'

The whore-stigma allows middle-class commentators to focus on the 'immorality' of sex workers rather than on the real issue, which is the poverty of working-class women the world over. It also gets the self-appointed experts off the hook; they don't have to face up to either their class responsibility or their hypocrisy. Once again a nineteenth-century quote is fitting. Writing to *The Times* in 1858, an anonymous prostitute ends her letter with an angry challenge to middle-class pontificators:

'We come from the dregs of society, as our so-called betters call it. What business has society to have dregs – such dregs as we? You... the pious, the moral, the respectable, as you call yourselves, who stand on your smooth and pleasant side of the great gulf you have dug, and keep between yourselves and the dregs, why don't you bridge it over or fill it up... Why stand you there mouthing with sleek face about morality? What is morality?'

Those of us working in the field have identified and named the whore-stigma, documented its social, cultural and political history, and shown how it operates in all its guises to punish women for being poor or stepping out of patriarchal line. We have witnessed its use against juvenile prostitutes when runaways – often desperately abused children – are treated as criminals by the law. Their plight is sensationalized and the focus shifted on to their means of survival (prostitution) rather than the circumstances which drove them onto the streets in the first place. We see it in rape cases, where it is used to transform the victim of violent crime into the criminal. Its most recent incarnation is in the British Government's attacks on single parents. This is a new variation on an old theme. The single parent is not a real proper mum functioning in the nuclear family set-up. She doesn't belong to a man; she's on her own, having kids, which means she's having sex, which means she's a whore. And she pays for this by being scapegoated.

So... where do we go from here? We have to deal with the whore-stigma at its roots by repealing the laws on prostitution. Legislation against the sex trade historically goes hand-in-hand with intolerance of sexual freedom in general, and women's sexual freedom in particular. Whores (like lesbians) have always been the prime targets of this repression as they are seen as dangerously free; challenging the notion of female monogamy and refusing to bind themselves to one man.

We have to bridge the gulf between Good Women and Bad Girls, and ultimately reject this sexual apartheid. Campaigns to rid society of the 'scourge of whoredom' have sprung from an unholy alliance of moral and political forces which aim at the repression and control of people's sexuality. Tirades against 'vile whores' from Andrea Dworkin – a prominent and influential anti-sex-industry feminist – cannot possibly help demolish the whore-stigma. Uncomfortable as it may be, it is implicit in the demand that women have control over their own bodies, that they also have a right to sell their sexual services, if they want to.

Finally, we women have suffered a deep and inhumane psychological maiming over the centuries. Our sexuality has been pathologized and made shameful, and we are still trying to crawl out from under the ensuing morass of guilt and anxiety. In order to do so, women have first to acknowledge and accept the untamed, bold, proud and compassionate spirit of the whore as an aspect of ourselves. Only then can we finally nail the sexual lies and myths that have been used against us for so long. ■

Nickie Roberts is the author of a number of books on the sex industry, including *Whores in History* (Harper Collins, 1992). A former stripper in London, she now lives in France.

WORLD CHARTER FOR PROSTITUTES' RIGHTS

International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights

LAWS

Decriminalize all aspects of adult prostitution resulting from individual decision.

Decriminalize prostitution and regulate third parties according to standard business codes. It must be noted that existing standard business codes allow abuse of prostitutes. Therefore, special clauses must be included to prevent the abuse and stigmatization of prostitutes (self-employed and others).

Enforce existing criminal laws against fraud, coercion, violence, child sexual abuse, child labor, rape and racism everywhere and across national boundaries, whether or not in the context of prostitution.

Eradicate laws that can be interpreted to deny freedom of association or freedom to travel to prostitutes within and between countries. Prostitutes have the right to a private life.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Guarantee prostitutes all human rights and civil liberties, including the freedom of speech, travel, immigration, work, marriage and motherhood and the right to unemployment insurance, health insurance and housing.

Grant asylum to anyone denied human rights on the basis of a 'crime of status', be it prostitution or homosexuality.

WORKING CONDITIONS

There should be no law which implies systematic zoning of prostitution. Prostitutes should have the freedom to choose their place of work and residence. It is essential that prostitutes can provide their services under the conditions that are absolutely determined by themselves and no-one else. There should be a committee to insure the protection of the rights of prostitutes and to whom prostitutes can address their complaints. This committee must be comprised of prostitutes and other professionals, like lawyers and supporters. There should be no law discriminating against prostitutes associating and working collectively in order to acquire a high degree of personal security.

HEALTH

All women and men should be educated to have periodical health screening for sexually transmitted diseases. Since health checks have historically been used to control and stigmatize prostitutes, and since adult prostitutes are generally even more aware of sexual health care than others, mandatory checks for prostitutes are unacceptable unless they are mandatory for all sexually active people.

SERVICES

Employment, counselling, legal and **housing** services for runaway children should be funded in order to prevent child prostitution and to promote child well-being and opportunity.

Prostitutes must have the same social benefits as all other citizens according to the different regulations in different countries.

Shelters and **services** for working prostitutes and re-training programs for prostitutes wishing to leave the life should be funded.

TAXES

No special taxes should be levied on prostitutes or prostitute businesses. Prostitutes should pay regular taxes on the same basis as other independent contractors and employers, and should receive the same benefits.

PUBLIC OPINION

Support educational programs to change social attitudes which stigmatize and discriminate against prostitutes and ex-prostitutes of any race, gender or nationality.

Develop education programs which help the public to understand that the customer plays a crucial role in the prostitution phenomenon, this role being generally ignored. The customer, like the prostitute, should not, however, be criminalized or condemned on a moral basis.

We are in solidarity with all workers in the sex industry.

ORGANIZATION

Organizations of prostitutes and ex-prostitutes should be supported to ensure further implementation of the above charter.

Source: First World Whores' Congress, Amsterdam 1985.

CHRISTOPHER PILLITZ / NETWORK

Bar girl's blues: if he pays the 'bar fine' – and she agrees – he can take her out of the club.

Home truths

Child prostitution, especially in the Third World, is an emotive issue. But is the information we get being distorted or exaggerated? ***Maggie Black*** *looks behind the sensationalism.*

OFELIA is a tall, pretty 15-year-old waitress in a club in Metro Manila. (All accounts of child prostitution begin with a gut-wrenching personal story, so here it is.) She and a friend ran away to Manila from her village in southern Luzon because home life was miserable and her father said he could not afford to keep her in school.

The two girls soon ran out of money and began to look for a job. They spotted a notice, 'Waitresses Wanted', and 10 minutes in the manager's office was all it took. They reported the following evening at 6pm, worked until 4am and were given lodgings nearby. For the first few days Ofelia's job was to take orders and serve drinks. Then the manager told her to sit with customers and entertain them. Her pay was based on the number of beers or 'ladies' drinks' she consumed. She soon found she was getting drunk every night. Some customers in the club became violent as the night wore on. Ofelia depended on the floor manager and security guards to protect her. But she also learned something else. If she agreed, a customer could pay a 'bar fine' and leave with Ofelia on his arm. These customers were all Filipinos – seldom was a foreigner seen in the club.

The pay she receives for these late-night dates is better than the commissions on drinks – and she doesn't have to get drunk or endure the rowdiness and abuse. She feels shame about her work at the club – it's not a nice place to be in. She is saving; she wants to build up her capital so that she can have a business of her own. And marriage? Of course she aspires to marriage. Maybe one of her dates...

There's something wrong here, surely? Child prostitute stories are about innocence brutally deflowered, eight-year-olds chained to beds, sickening victimization. The manager is supposed to be a villain, not a protector. Sure, he doesn't pay her proper wages, he encourages her to get drunk and chat up men – that's pretty bad, and against the law, even if he does pay for lodging and monthly health check-ups.

And what about the customers? They're supposed to be villains too, preferably Westerners on the sex circuit with vibrators in their pockets and deviant carnal lusts. Not dates seen as a profitable escape route from an unpleasant environment; certainly not potential marriage partners.

And 15? You can hardly call Ofelia a child. In lots of Muslim societies a high proportion of girls are married by 15. It's hardly unusual in any society for a tall, pretty girl to have had her first sexual fling by then. Anyway, she's not working in a brothel, she's been hired as a waitress.

No, this isn't real child prostitution. Or is it? There can be no more emotive coupling of words than 'child' with 'prostitution'. The image of a small girl or boy forced to deploy humanity's ultimate natural resource – the body – for the commercial purpose of sexual gratification is profoundly disturbing. And in the past few years this image has been increasingly paraded before us. It is widely accepted that the trade in youthful flesh is growing, the numbers of children involved are large, and a considerable proportion endure conditions close to slavery. A Special UN Rapporteur on The Sale of Children has been appointed. The Norwegian Government has informed the Council of Europe that: 'Every year, one million children are either kidnapped, bought, or in other ways forced to enter the sex market.'

The explosion in worldwide child sexual exploitation is frequently linked to 'sex tourism' – the promotion of recreational sex as a purpose of travel to certain Asian, and a few African, holiday destinations. Speciality tours for male paedophiles to the Philippines and Sri Lanka and the booming massage parlour and night-club life in Thai resorts, have attracted notoriety. Headlines about children rescued from brothels, occasional arrests of paedophiles, and activism to 'End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism' – ECPAT is the main international campaigning organization – have become routine. Together, they conjure a picture in which commercialized abuse of young girls and boys by international visitors are the dominant motif.

No-one can deny that such abuses do take place and rightly arouse horrified concern on behalf of the children involved. ECPAT and others have deservedly won praise for exposing them. But as a characterization of the vast majority of 'child prostitution' in Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, or virtually anywhere else, this picture is highly distorted. Solid information is seriously lacking. Despite all the noise around the subject, there are no research studies which provide reliable information about the extent of child prostitution, let alone the age and gender breakdown or the dynamics of supply and demand, either globally or within a specific country. In Bangkok, estimates of child prostitutes range absurdly from 2,500 to 800,000. No-one can produce a source for Norway's 'one million a year': it does not exist.

This is not to suggest there is no information; there is some. There is also intelligent deduction. And among the few things that can be stated with confidence is that the overwhelming majority of 'children' in prostitution are well past puberty, mostly in their mid-teens, and many are beyond both the legal age of marriage and of sexual consent. Another is that the majority of 'child prostitutes' are not employed as prostitutes, nor do they work in brothels. In Manila and Bangkok they work as waitresses, receptionists, bar girls, 'go-go' dancers, and the degree to which they engage in sex-for-cash varies with occupation and personal predilection. In Sri Lanka and Mombasa they sell curios or act as tour guides on the beach. Neither their work, nor their self-image, nor their aspirations are confined to sex work. The 'prostitute' label has been stuck on them by the beholder.

How much is for sale? Street boys scrape a living in Manila (above). Prostitutes promenade: bar girls in Thailand snatch some free time (opposite page).

PETER MARLOW / MAGNUM

Thus, in the phrase 'child prostitution', both words are questionably accurate – as far as the majority are concerned. And as for 'forced' into sexual work, in many cases the 'force' is metaphorical. There is often a strong element of volition, if not to enter, certainly to stay.

As with all child labour, it is extremely difficult to challenge the conventional wisdom without being accused of condoning what cannot, and must not, be condoned. But in order to address a problem effectively, it is vital to understand exactly what is going on. Many efforts to save or rehabilitate 'fallen girls' are conspicuously unsuccessful. Bangladeshi girls brought back from Pakistan, to where they have been illegally trafficked, often reappear in Karachi only months later. Girls rescued from Thai sex parlours similarly return. Some organizations working with Brazilian street girls make no effort to stop even very young girls from selling sex: some would say that this defence of a child's right to work is taken to lamentable excess. But the question is: what other choices do they have? They are poor. Most come from broken homes. There is no social safety-net. And they can earn, relatively, a lot of money.

The roles played by children in economic life in many countries are often derided because they do not fit with the modern idea of childhood as a long period of dependency and preparation for activities – work and procreation – labelled 'adults only'. In families still operating by pre-industrial norms, this division is unreal. By age 12 or 14, or by the end of primary school, millions of children in Africa, Asia and Latin America have no alternative but to assume adult roles. In rural areas boys shoulder more farming tasks, and girls assume more domestic responsibilities in preparation for marriage. But in town – and most developing countries are urbanizing at a fantastic rate – things are different. In town, they must earn. Youngsters' household contribution must be garnered in a job, or 'on the street'.

Normally, boys are sent out to earn; girls stay at home where they provide a domestic back-up to working mothers and their virtue can be protected. But this is not the case everywhere. In Thailand, for example, women have historically played a prominent role in trading and small business enterprise. The girls from the poverty-stricken North-East who today are recruited by employment agents into Bangkok's massage parlours are performing the expected filial duty of providing support to their families. The pattern of development has changed the circumstances in which they fulfill this role. Their mothers were vendors; the daughters sell sex. They send money home, and their parents are grateful. Many return eventually and marry on their savings.

Elsewhere, economic stress and mounting unemployment are increasingly pushing women and children into marginal and servile occupations. In the cities' expanding slums, domestic violence is rising and marital unions are increasingly volatile. Some girls are forced out of the home by violent or abusive step-parents; others simply have to go out to earn. What can they do? The only occupations open to them are commercialized versions of the domestic life they were raised for: housework, cleaning, baby-minding, cooking, and sex – the work of a married woman.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child places the outer limit of childhood at 18, and the word 'child' is now often used to denote the under-18 age-group. This creates anomalies. In most countries, the age of marriage is lower than this. But pregnancy is risky in the under-18s, and recent research suggests that until 20 a woman's genital area is immature and she is more susceptible to sexually-transmitted infections including HIV. So some commentators are now pushing 'child' up to age 20. At the same time, both the age of menstruation and of first sexual encounter are everywhere declining. A lengthening gap is opening between the onset of sexual activity and the official end of childhood.

This period in which the adolescent is both adult and child interacts with the growth of the sex industry and its commercialization. The sex market – like the marriage market – is one in which youth and 'freshness' have always commanded a high premium. Thus the majority of 'child prostitutes' are young adult entrants into a workplace which remunerates youthful good looks – especially feminine good looks.

The supply and demand factors related to child work, together with different cultural views of prostitution in different settings, are the most important influences at work. The role played by international tourism – especially paedophile tourism – in promoting child prostitution has been much overstated. The world's oldest profession has always been plied around men-away-from-home: soldiers, sailors, traders, pilgrims. The international businessman and the tourist are just today's most numerous, and usually most free-spending, customers. They contribute to an expansion in the sex industry generally, and to that extent they play an important role. But the majority of customers for teenage prostitutes are neither foreigners nor tourists. Except in a few special resort locations, tourists are not the demons of commercialized child sexual abuse that they have been painted.

In Olongapo in the Philippines, whose leisure industry grew up around the presence of the US naval fleet at Subic Bay, a study of 1,000 under-age hospitality workers found that half their customers were locals. In Thailand, commercial sex is a regular form of male entertainment. Over three-quarters of Thai men have visited a prostitute by the age of 19. The age of the girl depends largely on the depth of the client's pocket and his social status. Younger girls start in the cheaper establishments; many try to graduate to smarter places once they've learned their trade. International travellers typically patronize the fancier clubs. According to one analyst, most Westerners prefer girls older than 18; but expansion in the top end of the market does tend to draw girls in at the bottom, and the age of entry does appear to be declining.

HOMER SYKES / NETWORK

The onus of guilt carried by tourists is partly explained by their visibility. Then there is the fact that no society wants to admit that it practises 'child prostitution'. And where the evidence is undeniable, it is more bearable to blame the 'unclean other' – decadent foreigners with their incomprehensible tastes and misbehaviours. Where there is an overlay of North-South exploitation – the Western tourist ruining innocent paradise with his credit card and unleashed libido – this version plays easily in certain, well-meaning ears.

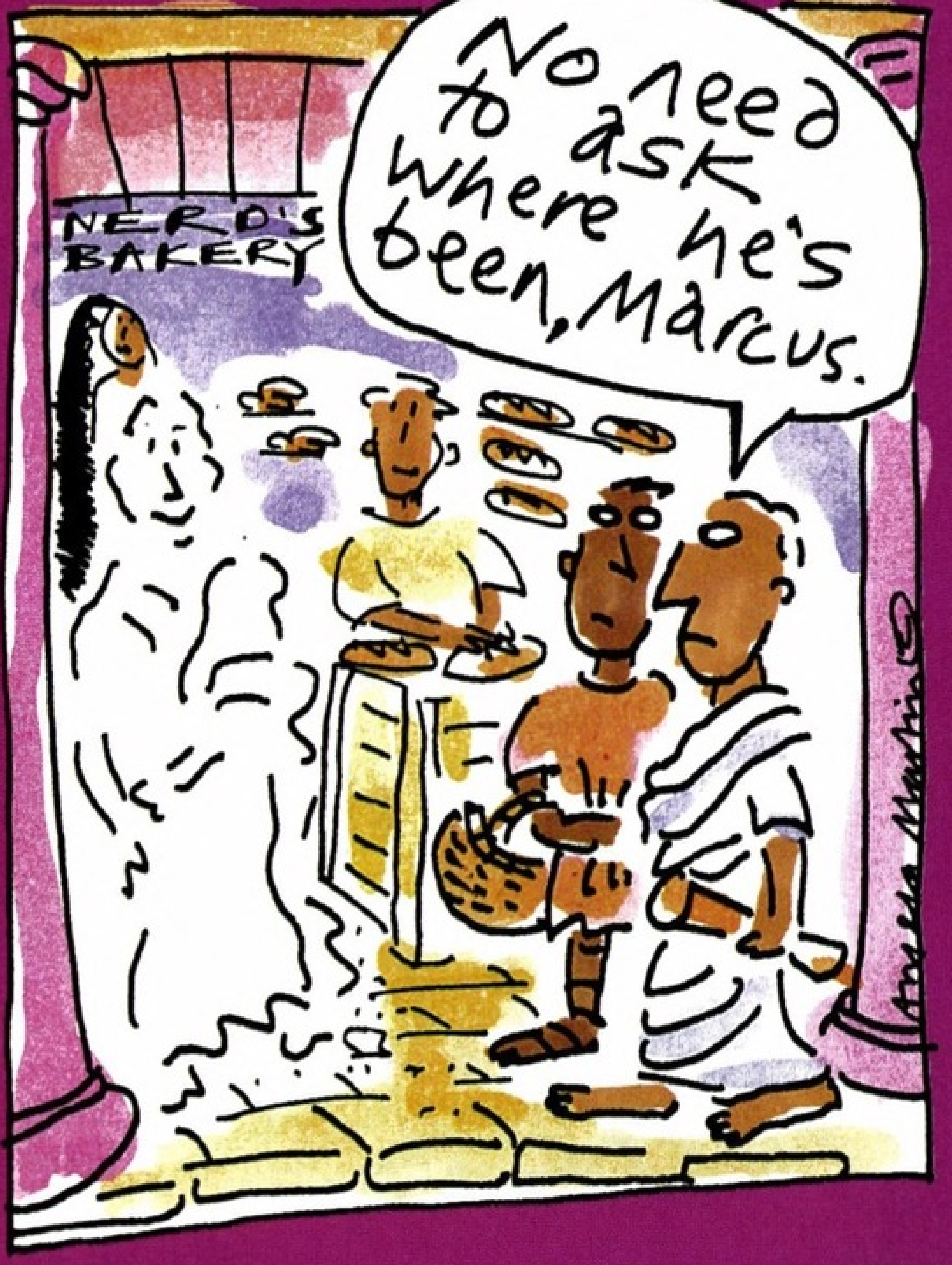
There is no need to look further than the rigid systems of girl protection which used to – sometimes still do – operate in most societies to recognize that the notion of innocence perverted by the evil outsider is far-fetched. 'Simple' societies were by no means so simple that they did not perceive the risk to girls of lascivious male intent. The circumstances in which they can continue these protections – customs such as early marriage and purdah which women activists anyway deplore – are vanishing, and nothing has been put in their place. Girls venture out into the world, obliged for one reason or another to enter the workplace. They are young, sexually mature, under-educated, ill-prepared for adult life, their options are limited, and like Ofelia in Metro Manila, the outcome is a foregone conclusion.

What is the solution? Even if an Ofelia is above the age of sexual consent, her absorption into the sex industry is still unjustifiable. She and millions of today's young people have inadequate physical, psychological and emotional resources to negotiate the path through the minefield of potential adult sexual – or other – exploitation. For girls in particular, these inadequacies need to be repaired, mainly through education. The campaigns to end 'child prostitution' should indeed continue; those who live off, or co-operate in the sexual exploitation of minors are reprehensible and should be brought to book. But little is served by distorting the analytical framework and obscuring the main dynamics at work. The child victim and the paedophile tourist are only a small part of the picture. The Ofelias are the rest. ■

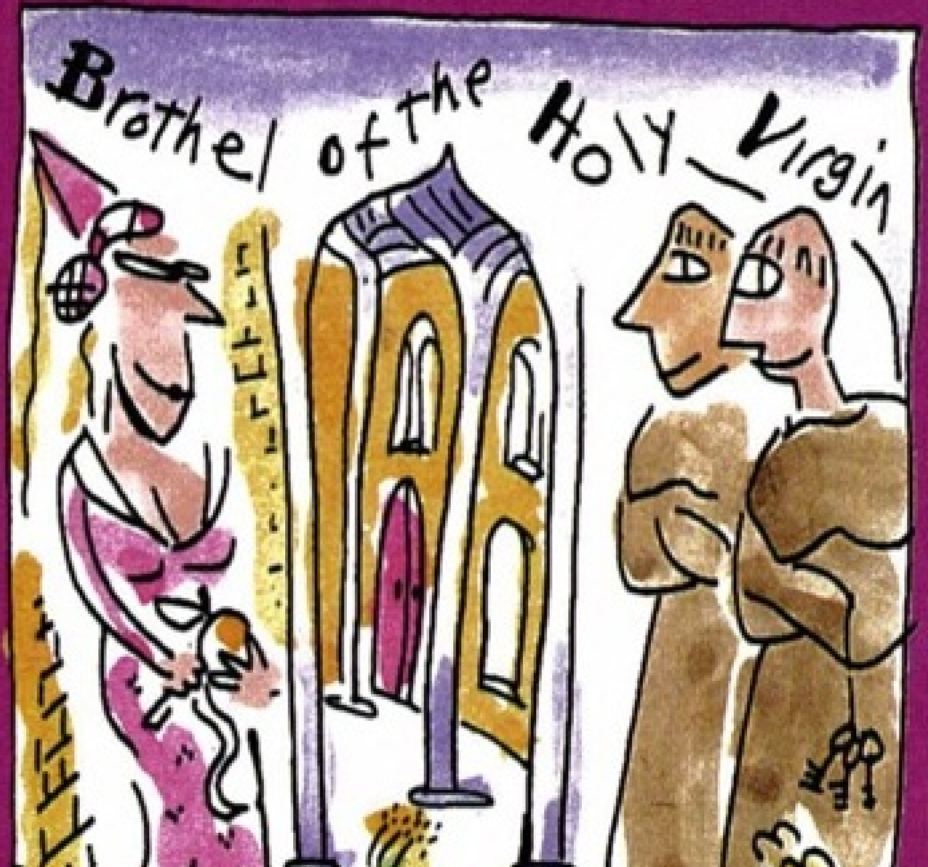
Maggie Black is a writer and editor. She is preparing a report for The International Labour Organization (ILO) on working children.

Simply...
strange behaviour

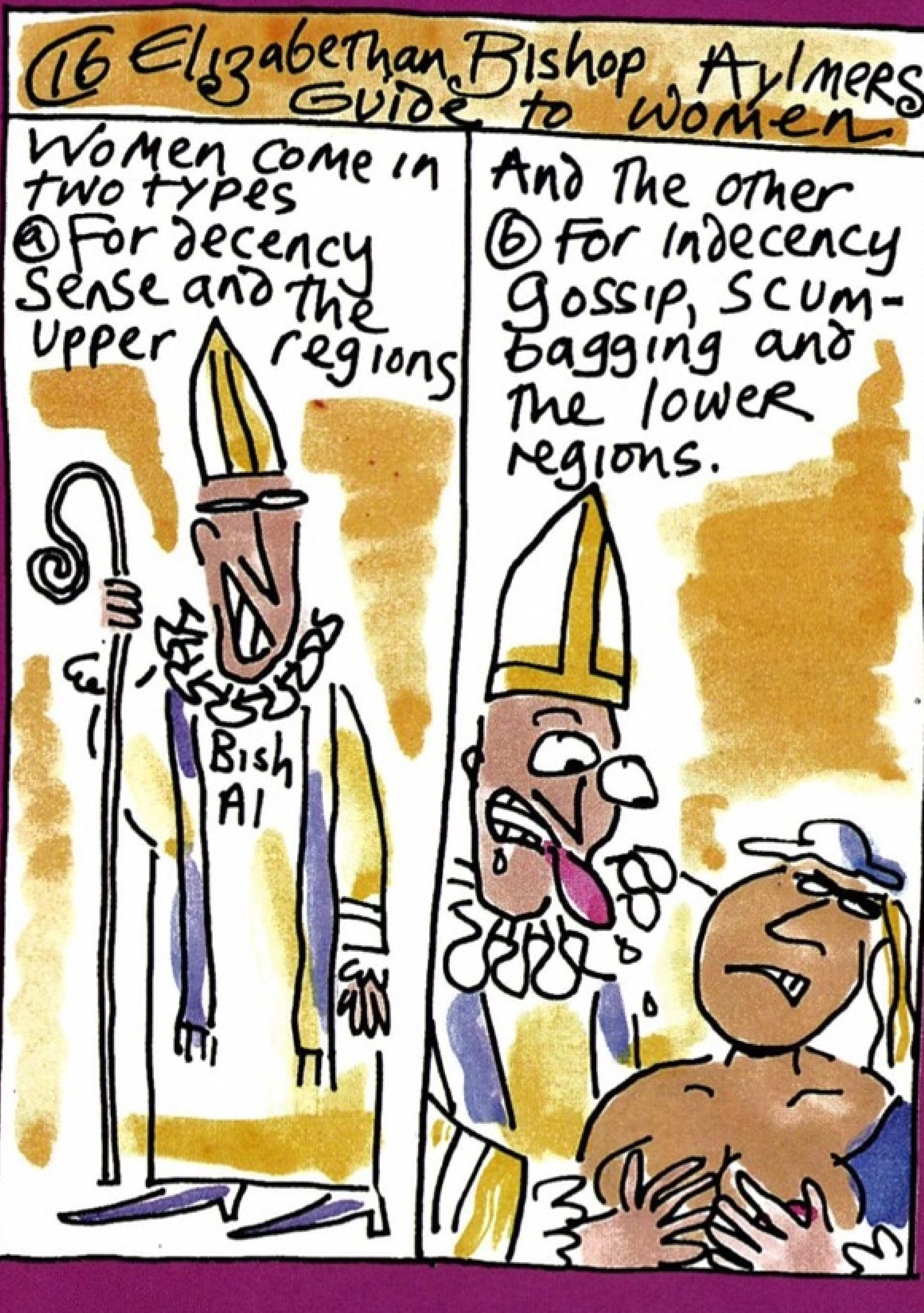
Prostitution has always generated strange and hypocritical responses from male-dominated society. As a result prostitutes, throughout history, have found themselves in some bizarre situations...


NERO'S BAKERY
No need to ask where he's been, Marcus.
Angela Martin

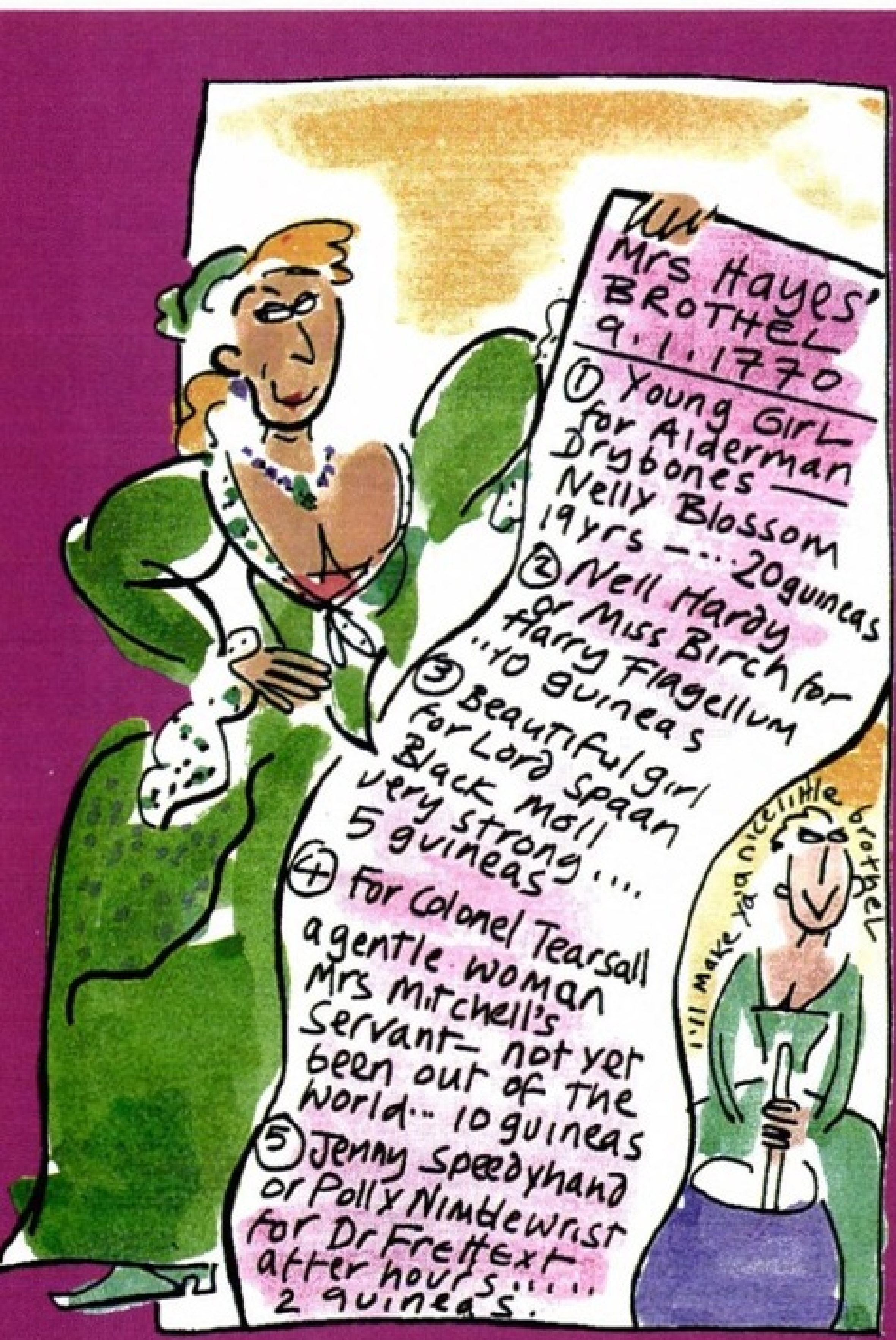
Prostitutes in Ancient Rome had their 'cells' hidden away in the back of bakers' shops.


Brothel of the Holy Virgin

In medieval Europe, the Church often had a controlling financial interest in brothels.

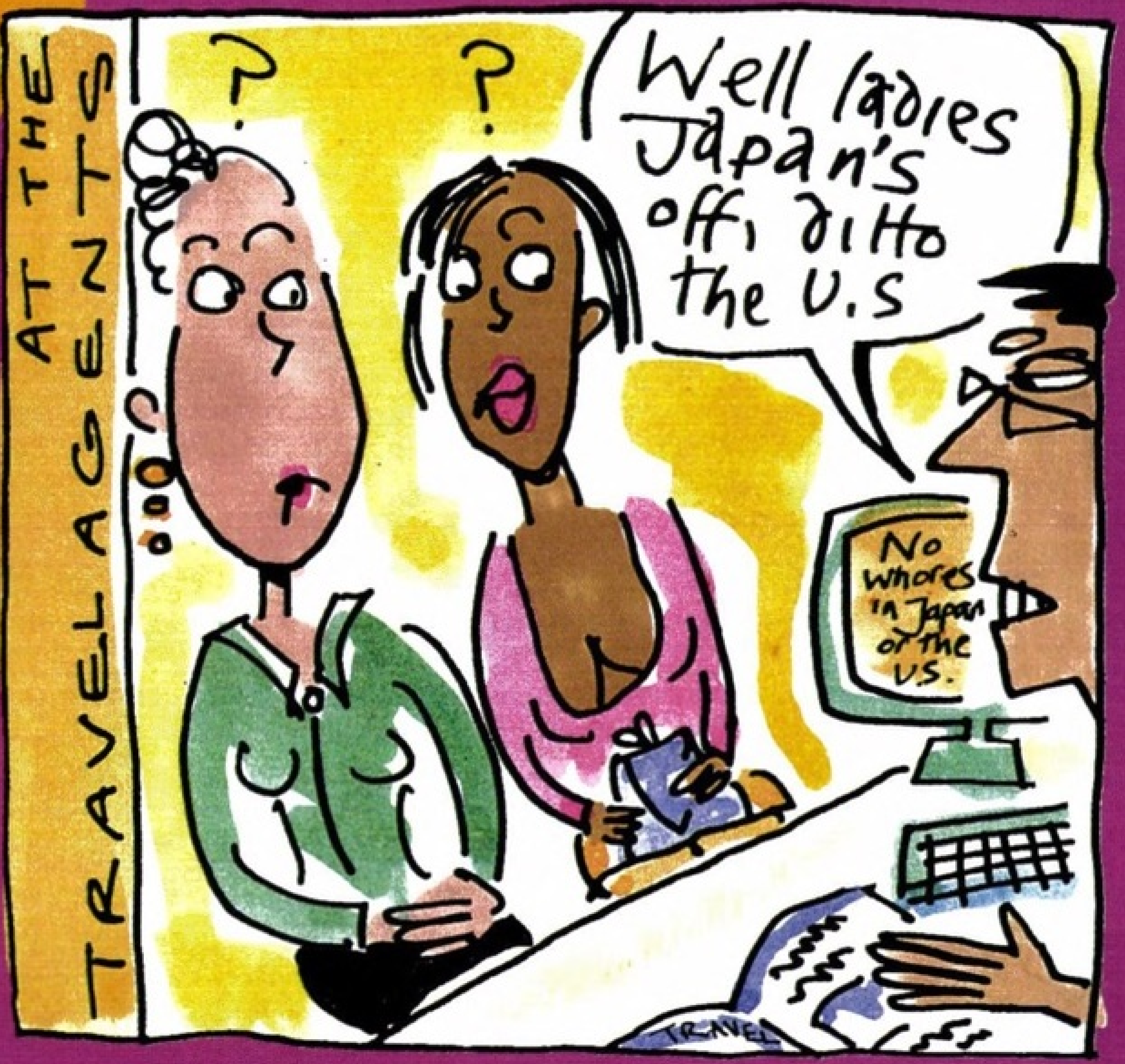

16 Elizabethan Bishop Aylmers Guide to Women
Women come in two types
ⓐ For decency sense and the upper regions
And the other
ⓑ For indecency gossip, scum-bagging and the lower regions.
Bish Al

The sight of 'indiscreet' women would provoke uncontrolled verbal ejaculations in the fifteenth century English cleric, Bishop Aylmer. He proclaimed them: 'fond foolish wanton tattlers, triflers, wavering, witless, feeble, careless, rash, proud, tale-bearers, eavesdroppers, rumour-raisers, evil-tongued, worse-minded, and in every way doltified with the dregs of the devil's dunghill'.


Mrs Hayes' BROTHEL 9.1.1770
① Young Girl for Alderman Drybones — Nelly Blossom 19yrs —... 20guineas
② Nell Hardy or Miss Birch for Harry Flagellum ...10 guineas
③ Beautiful girl for Lord Spaan Black Moll very strong.... 5 guineas
④ For Colonel Tearsall a gentle woman Mrs Mitchell's Servant – not yet been out of the world... 10 guineas
⑤ Jenny Speedyhand or Polly Nimblewrist for Dr Frettext after hours..... 2 guineas.
I'll make ya a nice little brothel

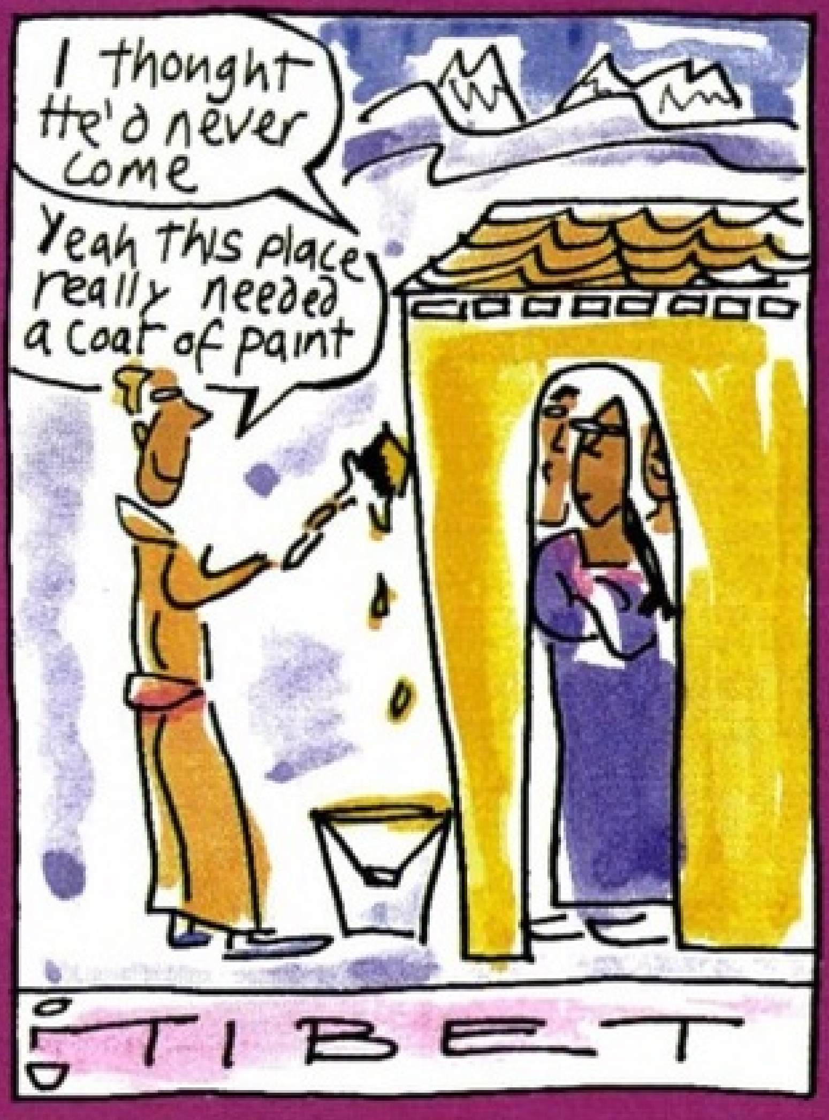
Punters' precise preferences were revealed when the detailed price list from Charlotte Hayes' brothel was printed in a 1779 issue of ***Nocturnal Revels.*** She retired with a fortune of $20,000 - a millionaire by today's standards.

7

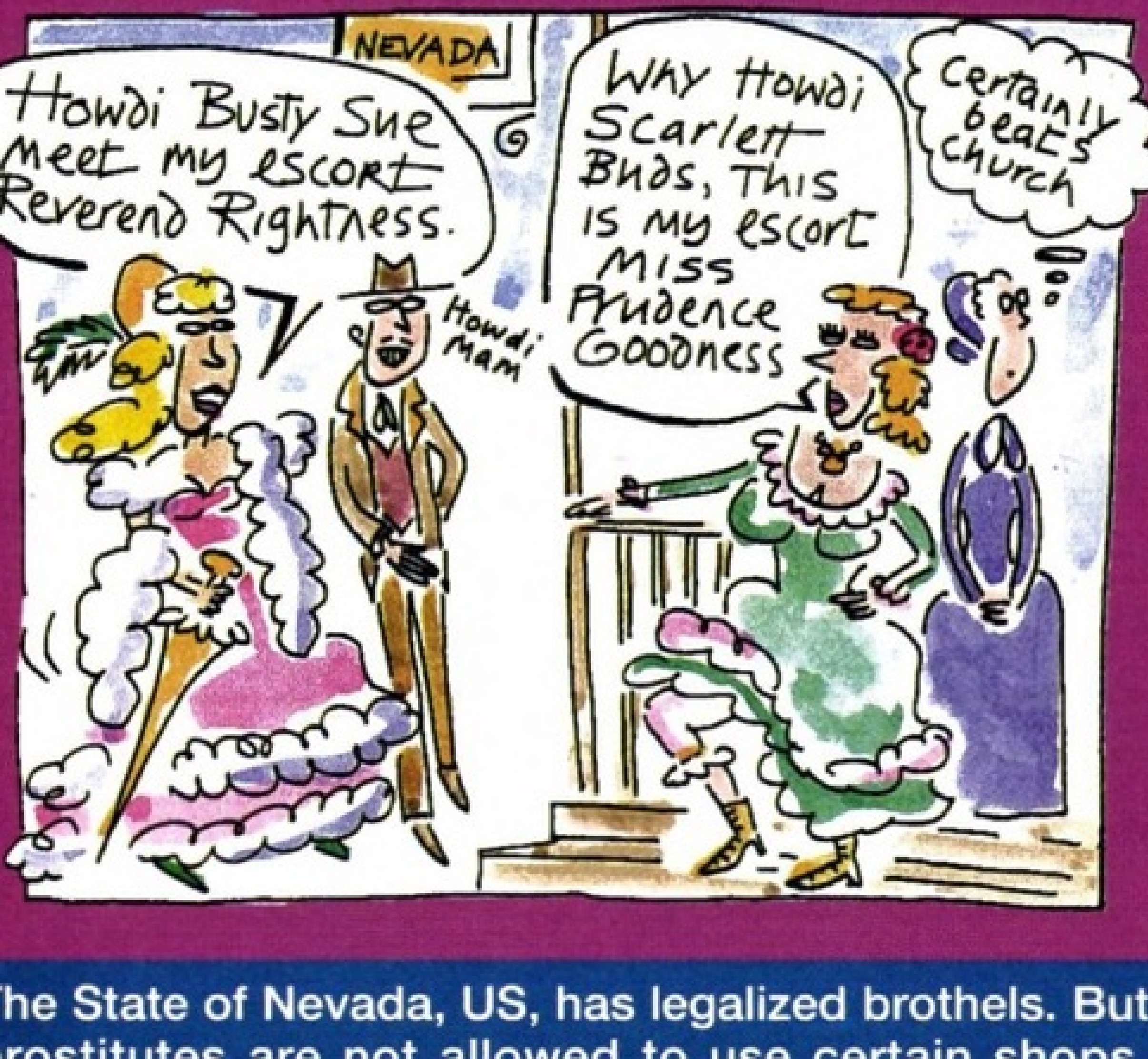

AT THE TRAVEL AGENTS
? ?
Well ladies Japan's off, ditto the U.S
No whores in Japan or the U.S.
TRAVEL

Self-acclaimed prostitutes and those with 'criminal' convictions are still barred from entering certain so-called 'developed' countries.

5


I thought He'd never come
Yeah this place really needed a coat of paint
TIBET

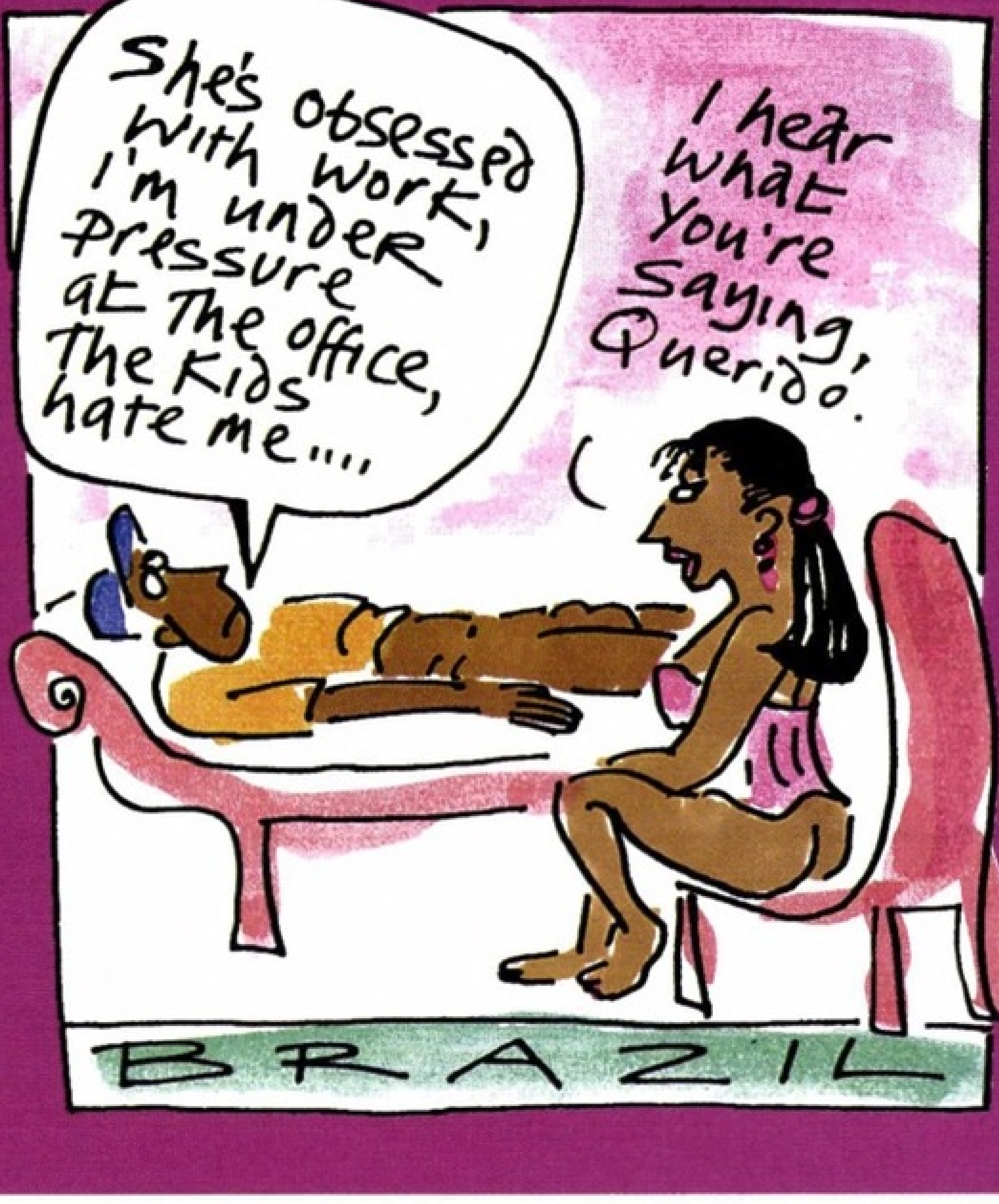
Brothels in Tibet were painted yellow to signify transferred holiness after a Dalai Lama had visited.


NEVADA
6
Howdi Busty Sue meet my escort Reverend Rightness.
Howdi Mam
Why Howdi Scarlett Buds, This is my escort Miss Prudence Goodness
Certainly beats church

The State of Nevada, US, has legalized brothels. But prostitutes are not allowed to use certain shops, and must be chaperoned whenever they go out.

8

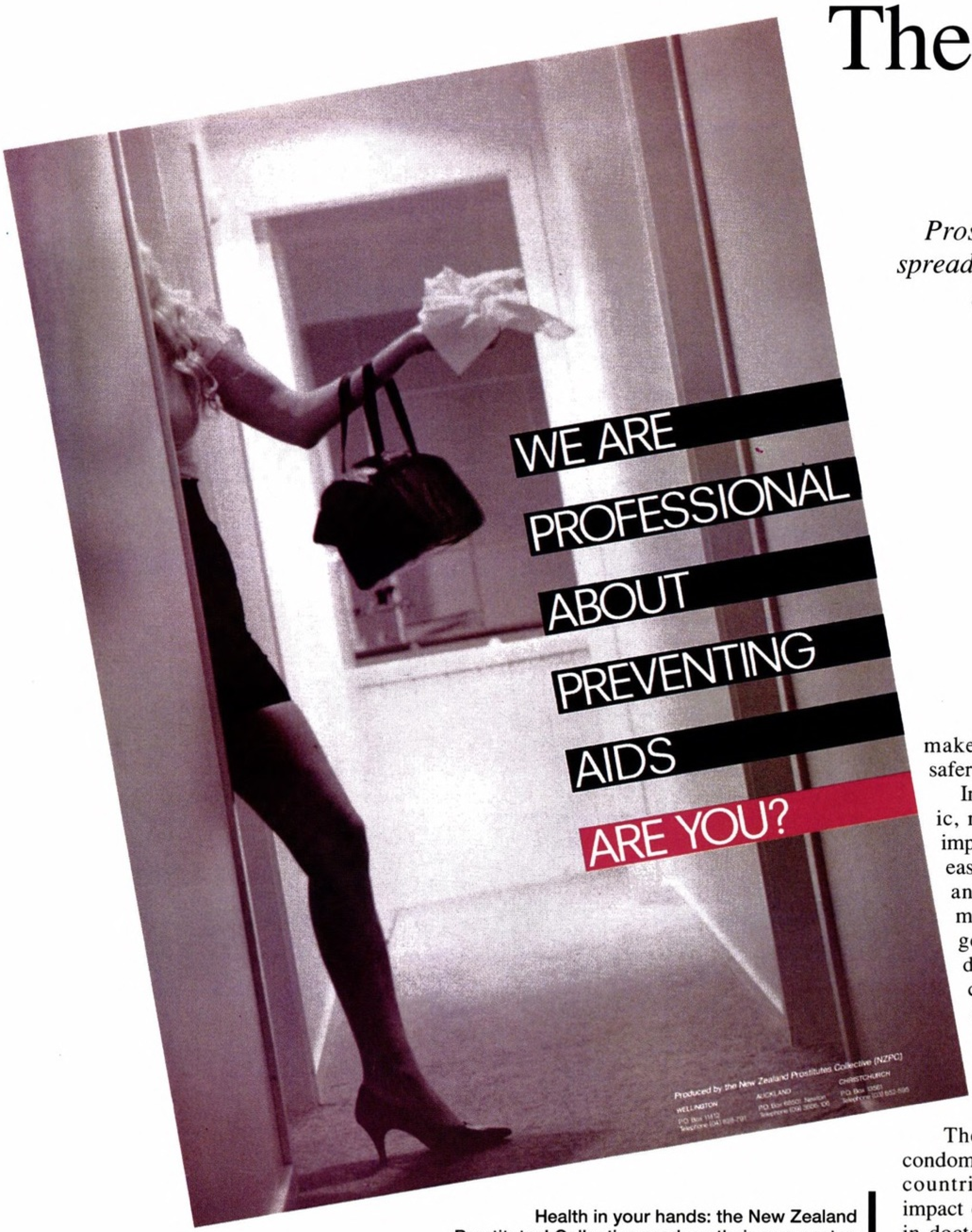
Prostitutes, in all parts of the world and in all times, have found themselves performing the role of therapist.


She's obsessed with work, I'm under pressure at the office, The kids hate me....
I hear what you're saying, Querido.
BRAZIL

CARTOONS: ANGELA MARTIN

The healthy hooker

Prostitutes are often blamed for spreading AIDS. ***Catherine Healy*** *and* ***Anna Reed*** *say they do the opposite.*



Health in your hands: the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective produce their own poster.

A SMARTLY-DRESSED couple check into a city hotel armed with red wine and condoms. In a building across the street a couple, who have just met, are putting on a condom. Down a lover's lane, in the back seat of a car, two young people, high on dope, are removing one after finishing sex. Out in the suburbs a man puts one on before he has sex with his regular partner.

No, this is not a couple who are having an affair, nor are they people who have just met at a bar, nor teenagers after the school dance. And they are certainly not long-time lovers. They are all people who are part of the sex industry – sex workers and their clients.

Historically, sex workers have been blamed for passing on sexually-transmitted diseases. But in many parts of the world the facts are showing something quite different. It is our belief that sex workers know a great deal about the human side of sex, and have developed some experience relevant to the prevention of the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases. They know a lot about sex and the thoughts, behaviours and attitudes that go with it. And this makes them the ideal transmitters of safer sex practice.

In the shadow of the AIDS pandemic, many prostitutes are aware of the implications that the spread of the disease has, not only for their own lives and livelihoods, but also for their many sex partners, and in turn for the general population. Consequently, day and night they instruct their clients in safer sex practices before engaging in sexual contact with them. For those clients who protest the message is clear. To quote an imposing transsexual worker we know, it's 'No joe, no go!'

There is now near-universal use of condoms by sex workers in industrialized countries. This is having a far greater impact on sexual culture than all the chats in doctors' clinics. We can't prove it, of course, but it is probable that prostitutes have been more successful in safer sex education than all the television advertisements put together. After all, the best way for someone to learn something is to do it. So it follows, the best way for a man to start to feel OK about condoms is to have someone put one on him, and then proceed to give him a pleasurable experience.

Yet, somehow, it's still the sex workers who are perceived by many to be a major reservoir of infection, the vectors for the transmission of HIV/AIDS into the general population. In the early days of AIDS it was inevitable that the sex industry would be scrutinized. The media in our own coun-

Aids on the table: Brazilian prostitutes have formed their own organization and educate themselves about safer sex.

BOTH PHOTOS: MARK EDWARDS / STILL PICTURES

try – Aotearoa/New Zealand – ran stories that whipped up hysteria against prostitutes, with images of the 'vengeful AIDS victim... a crazed hooker on revenge trip against all punters'. We have yet to hear about the crazed punter hell-bent on infecting prostitutes.

Some prostitutes do have unsafe sex. Sometimes they are badgered into having it by an obnoxious or drunken client or they may simply be offered more money to do so. Sometimes the workers are themselves affected by alcohol or drugs. But many prostitutes are badgered, are offered extra money, work under the influence of drink or drugs – and yet they don't do anything unsafe.

Why not? Because they take care of themselves; because they have self-esteem. That is the key to stopping sexually-transmitted diseases. And the more control sex workers have over their lives the more likely they are to develop self-esteem. If they do not they are more likely to be careless and at risk from infections like HIV.

In 1986 there was an international health conference in Ottawa, which produced a charter calling for 'all people to achieve their fullest health potential'. This includes 'a secure foundation in a supportive environment, access to information, life skills and opportunities for making healthy choices'. It goes on to say that, in order to achieve such potential, people need to 'take control of those things which determine their health'.

Policy-makers in our Department of Health must have paid attention to this important document, because they formed a contract with sex workers and supplied funding to peer educators to run AIDS-prevention programmes in the sex industry. The New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective was born.

This funding has allowed us to set up a community drop-in centre, where sex workers can gather, receive support from others and information relevant to their health. Condoms and other safe-sex accessories are also made available. Outreach workers go around the country spreading the prevention messages and there are needle-exchange programmes for those prostitutes who need them. The success of these programmes has resulted in a low incidence of HIV/AIDS in the sex industry.

At one of our centres we've set up a medical clinic where we carry out anonymous HIV-testing for sex workers. Can you imagine how empowering it is for prostitutes to interview doctors and nurses to ascertain their suitability for staffing our clinic?

Obviously we are biased towards programmes run by sex workers, but the assistance of health professionals to complement our programmes is important. We don't need their sympathy – just their empathy and their appreciation of the fact that sex workers need not be part of the problem of AIDS but part of the solution.

This is more difficult in countries where the economic or social situation of prostitutes makes it difficult for them to use or to purchase condoms. In countries where AIDS has impacted significantly on the sex industry there are few supports for prostitutes; they have had to organize and to educate themselves.

In Brazil, for example, the prostitutes' organization in Rio de Janeiro is trying to teach its members about AIDS and safer sex. In Thailand the group Empower teaches sex workers to negotiate safer sex in English, the language most commonly used by tourists. And in Nepal a research project involving voluntary HIV-testing of sex workers resulted in the promotion of and increase in condom use. Sex workers subsequently set up their own support and education groups – the first organization of its kind in Nepal.

In Africa sex workers use condoms less than their counterparts elsewhere, and the incidence of AIDS among prostitutes has increased dramatically. In one study of prostitutes in Nairobi it was found that infection rates rose from 4 per cent in 1981 to 61 per cent in 1985. But education of both clients and workers can make a difference. One campaign in central Africa which combined education with the distribution of condoms reported that 75 per cent of the 596 prostitutes involved were now using them.

The World Health Organization says that: 'In order to achieve... risk-reducing practices, it is essential to avoid discrimination against people engaged in prostitution, and to ensure their active participation in prevention efforts'. In China this clearly doesn't happen: sex workers and their clients are arrested and sent off to re-education camps. Most countries deal with sex work by legislating against it. But this forces sex workers to hide, which also has the effect of cutting them off from society. There is little evidence to show that this affects the amount of commercial sex available. But it does affect the health, welfare and self-esteem of sex workers, which are in inverse proportion to the legal sanctions against them.

Prostitution law reform is good for health – and its beneficial effects could be considerably accelerated by giving sex workers the information, the international connections, the support and the resources they need.

We look forward to the day when the contribution that sex workers can make to the health of the whole community is recognized. Only then might the word 'prostitute' be replaced with the phrase 'safe-sex educator'. ■

Catherine Healy and **Anna Reed** are members of the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective.

ILLUSTRATION: JACKIE MORRIS

PROSTITUTION & THE LAW – THE FACTS

From Rio to Rome, from Dakar to Darwin, laws on prostitution are illogical and contradictory. They reflect the confusion felt by lawyers and by the general public about work so clearly connected with sex. Child prostitution is illegal nearly everywhere, but the law has little effect. The legal situation for adult prostitutes falls into two main categories: prohibition, which simply relocates the sex trade, and registration, which fails to produce the desired controls. **Prostitutes everywhere are persecuted.**

ARGENTINA

Policy: Not a crime, according to Article 19 of the Constitution: 'private actions that in no way offend order and public morals or do damage to a third party are reserved to be judged by God and fall outside the competence of judges'. But it is illegal to solicit, to aid or abet a prostitute, live off their earnings, or run a brothel.

Practice: Prostitutes are arrested and fined or jailed for 21 days under edicts issued at the discretion of the police. There is no State protection.

BRAZIL

Policy: Not illegal. It is illegal to operate an hotel or a house for prostitution purposes, to live off a prostitute's earnings or to exploit a child for the purposes of prostitution.

Practice: Prostitutes are tolerated. Transvestites are generally arrested for offending public morals. Male prostitution is either subsumed under female or categorized as homosexuality.

CANADA

Policy: Not an offence *per se* in the Criminal Code. Private transactions are legal, but soliciting, pimping and brothel-keeping are illegal under federal law.

Practice: Some cities use municipal by-laws relating to loitering and public nuisance against prostitutes. Prostitutes' rights organizations have been working to repeal the prostitution laws and to empower prostitutes to improve their working conditions.

EGYPT

Policy: Illegal and punishable by imprisonment. Egyptian law states that a man who is caught with a prostitute is not imprisoned; instead, his testimony is used to convict and imprison the prostitute.

Practice: Prostitutes are socially ostracized.

GERMANY

Policy: Legal. Prostitutes are required to have health check-ups, but are not allowed to have health insurance. Brothels are in designated areas and operate only during certain hours.

Practice: When a brothel-owner improves the working conditions, this is seen to be stimulating prostitution and they could face prosecution. An active prostitutes' rights movement is based in Berlin.

INDIA

Policy: Illegal. There is a plethora of laws against the sex trade, including one in 1985 to ban *devidasis*, or temple prostitutes.

Practice: Organized networks for buying and selling women and girls exist despite the legislation. *Devidasis* continue to be sold to the temples. Any sexual intercourse outside socially acceptable unions is likely to be regarded as prostitution.

IRAN

Policy: The 1925 Penal Code stated that prostitution was not a crime in itself, but that it was a crime to advocate it, to aid or abet a woman to enter prostitution or to operate a brothel. The current regime believes that execution – by firing squad or stoning – is a more fitting penalty.

Practice: Execution is common. Some Iranian feminists regard *mut'a*, a form of temporary marriage where the woman has few rights, as akin to prostitution. Under *mut'a*, it is possible to be 'married' for as little as half an hour.

KENYA

Policy: No legal definition of prostitution in the Penal Code. But it is illegal to live off the earnings of prostitution.

Practice: Prostitution is increasing in urban areas as many rural migrant women fail to find other employment. Police regularly harass prostitutes. Researchers on AIDS and prostitution report that any woman who is single and has multiple male sex partners is considered to be a prostitute, whether or not money changes hands.

THE NETHERLANDS

Policy: Prostitution is legal, regarded as a matter of privacy. Exploitation and pimping are illegal. Local councils decide when and where to prosecute. In most cities, soliciting is forbidden.

Practice: Prostitution businesses operate in a free-market situation. The businesses and the prostitutes have to pay taxes. But prostitutes have no rights as working women and face severe social stigmatization.

(NEW ZEALAND) AOTEAROA

Policy: Prostitution is not illegal, but soliciting, brothel-keeping, living off the earnings of a prostitute and procuring are. Conviction can result in a prison sentence of up to five years.

Practice: Sex workers must use elaborate precautions to disguise the real nature of their work. This provides a major impediment for HIV/AIDS education in the sex industry.

PERU

Policy: Legal, with brothels licensed and regulated by the Ministry of Interior. Prostitutes must be registered with the Government, carry ID cards and submit to a check-up every 15 days.

Practice: Prostitution is on the increase. The Government receives income from licensing brothels.

SENEGAL

Policy: Not illegal in itself. But it is illegal to aid or abet a woman to enter prostitution, to live off the earnings of a prostitute or to run a brothel. Prostitutes must be registered with the State, undergo regular health examinations and carry health cards.

Practice: Prostitution exists predominantly in urban centres and is increasing due to economic hardship. Prostitutes are considered social outcasts.

THAILAND

Policy: It is illegal under the Criminal Code to work as a prostitute or to live off the earnings of a prostitute.

Practice: Prostitutes operate as 'entertainers'. Sex tourism, including sex with children, is common, though the majority of clients are local.

TURKEY

Policy: Legalized prostitution means that state brothels exist in certain areas of each town. Prostitutes have to register, carry special identity cards, and undergo bi-weekly medical examinations.

Practice: Prostitution is very profitable for brothel owners; an Istanbul brothel owner has for the past three years been the city's top taxpayer. But prostitutes' lives are severely restricted; on top of which they are socially ostracized and therefore unable to find other work.

UK

Policy: Prostitution itself is not illegal, but soliciting, pimping and kerb-crawling are, making it effectively against the law. Most prostitutes have spent periods of time in jail, charged with soliciting.

Practice: Conviction means that they are banned from certain jobs and from travelling to certain places (such as the US) for the rest of their lives.

Information supplied by writer and activist **Priscilla Alexander** who has been co-director of COYOTE and a consultant to WHO on sex work and AIDS; and **Mr A de Graaf Stichting**, an Amsterdam-based information centre on prostitution.

JENNY MATTHEWS / NETWORK

The **meeting** of the ***michês***

In Brazil machismo rules and male prostitutes rarely dare admit they are gay. But the michês *– or hustlers – of Rio are starting to come out of the shadows, reports* ***Paulo Longo.***

'WHAT are you doing here?' The question has a threatening tone. The policeman's body language is unfriendly. The usual response is 'I'm waiting for a friend', or 'I'm just taking a walk'. Under no circumstances must the boy reveal the true purpose of the 'walk'. He must not say: 'I'm here to make money' or simply 'I'm selling my body'. He presses his lips together and the officer walks away.

To be a hustler, or *michê*, on the streets of Brazil is to belong to the fringe, and quite often to be part of the cycle of drug abuse as well. So the question: 'What are you doing here?' is really another, more complex question altogether. It is: 'Why are you here?' There are some who would insist that to be a prostitute means that you are poor; you are first and foremost a victim. And if you are a male prostitute, then you are not only poor but you are also homosexual. The stigma sticks.

Our experience has shown that poverty cannot be used as the only justification for prostitution. In our day-to-day work at Programa 'Pegação' – a slang word meaning 'seducing' or 'catching someone for sex' – most of the boys approach us first as potential clients. As time goes by, and the relationship gains more intimacy, we hear things like 'With you I would have sex for free, 'cause I like you a lot'. The mask falls away. This mask is what the client usually wants: a young boy, seemingly macho. Never ask a male sex worker if he is gay. The reaction might be more than you bargained for. In our culture, to be accused of homosexuality is an insult: 'Me, gay? What are you thinking of? I'm a man, I just come here to fuck some queers for money.'

In a society where the macho figure is seen as the cornerstone of masculinity, anyone who is not macho is rejected. So the hustler feels he has to be seen as macho, paid to fulfil the wishes of the 'almost-female'. Hustlers adopt false names which act like registered labels to help sell the product, which is the macho state.

Off the street, things are different. We have a proverb in Brazil: 'Within four walls, anything goes'. Protected by the secrecy of a room and the anonymity of the partners, the macho mask can fall. It is difficult to be gay. But it is not difficult to have gay practices in bed. The concepts of 'active' and 'passive' are much more important than how the individual defines himself. That's why the hustler will approach the client saying: 'I don't get fucked, I just fuck'. And the boys can use their lack of money as an alibi for an extremely repressed homosexuality: 'I don't like men; I just do it for the cash'. Neither party has to reveal what goes on 'within four walls'.

This statement doesn't hold up in the face of the offer to have sex with the educators of Programa Pegação for free. Most of the boys we encounter in street sex work will begin by telling us that they hate what they do. Many pejorative terms are used to define the clients: *veado sujo* (dirty queer); *engolidor de cobra* (snake-swallower); *chupador de pica* (cock-sucker). Some *michês*, researchers and educators define prostitution as a vice, to which hustlers are said to be addicted. People become addicted to something that brings pleasure. And the attempted seduction of Pegação educators by the *michês* shows that money is a secondary rather than a primary objective.

There must be some pleasure amid the danger. Hustlers face violence from police and from clients. Many boys bear the scars of such violence on their bodies. *Michês* in Rio de Janeiro have developed a strategy to protect themselves from such violence. They use public telephones. In Rio, not all telephones can receive incoming calls. But there are some in certain areas which are used by taxi-drivers. So when a *michê* goes with a client, he will arrange for colleagues to stay by one of these phones. If they don't call in half an hour, then the other *michês* will search for them, first in the agreed place and then throughout the hotels of Copacabana and downtown Rio.

They make this arrangement within earshot of the client. And so far it has worked. The boys have only failed to call twice, and that was due to an out-of-order telephone!

Little by little, male prostitution is coming out of the shadows. This may not improve the way that it is viewed by others, but it does reflect an internal change. Until now, in the few academic papers, in the press and even in social debates, male sex work is not even up there with female sex work as 'the oldest profession'. *Putas* (female prostitutes) are recognized, sometimes even being given the title of 'public utility professionals'. But the combination of homosexuality and prostitution is often too much for many Brazilians to contemplate. Even within the gay community, where most of the *michês'* clients come from, they find female prostitution more acceptable than male. Many would rather deny themselves sex than pay for it. And it is common to hear gay men tell the hustler with whom they have just had sex: 'If you had sex with me you must be gay as well...' This generates a tension within the relationship, because the client exposes what the boy does not want to hear.

People involved in health care say that hustlers are hard to reach, and use this as an excuse to deny them health services and legal aid. At Pegação we believe that *michês* are hard to reach because they are difficult to pin down as an homogeneous group. Unlike *putas*, they do not dress in a particular way for work. They do not fit into a particular category and are quite likely to earn money in other ways as well. They might be office-boys. They might be street kids. Or they might work in the informal economy as peanut vendors or shoeshiners.

Michês working on the streets in Rio are generally very young, between 11 and 23 years old. One of Pegação's objectives in our work with the *michês* is to prevent the spread of HIV. In order to do this, we have to persuade them to want to protect themselves. We work constantly on their self-esteem. When Pegação first started in 1989 most of the *michês* were not interested in AIDS. The official prevention campaigns usually stressed the message 'AIDS kills', so when we came to talk about it, we usually heard: 'Don't talk to me about AIDS, OK? I already know that AIDS kills. So what? Other things also kill. Police kill, hunger kills, other diseases also kill... Even parents kill their children...'

It was clear that death wasn't a theme to provoke an impact. In addition, the boys were not used to people offering them anything related to their health and well-being. And there was another problem. AIDS used to be seen as a gay disease. As most of the boys did not consider themselves to be gay, they didn't see it as their problem.

It was clear that our project needed to consider other health issues, since even basic hygiene depends on self-respect. Pegação's work is based on regular personal contact with the hustlers; a group of educators goes to different areas of the town known for prostitution and discusses a range of issues. Life histories are debated on the streets. The regularity of such contact builds up the relationship and opens up more intimate discussion. It also reinforces positive messages about health.

The project also realized that it needed to advocate the rights of *michês*, from the right to have their health seen to, to very simple issues like asserting their rights to be served in a bar. The bar managers are having to learn that they can't discriminate against people as long as they pay.

But it was not until a year ago that the first meeting of *michês* in Rio took place. It was also one of the first in the whole of Latin America. Together in a bar, after a picnic on the beach, we discussed the subjects which really interested us. Topic after topic came up that we would never normally have raised. We discussed desire and pleasure. It was all right to say if you liked men. This has led to new 'romances' among some of the boys who came to the meeting. They are now beginning to be able to combine their desires with their needs. It is less of a problem for many of them to recognize that they are working when they sell their bodies. They know that they are selling pleasure, which is nice. Some of the boys are planning a proper organization with regular meetings. Sooner or later, when someone approaches them with the question 'What are you doing here?', it will be easier to answer 'I am working'. ■

Paulo Henrique Longo is a psychologist and the co-ordinator of Programa Pegação, a project started in 1989 for HIV/AIDS prevention among male sex workers in Rio.

The traveller

I STARTED working on the street when I was 17 and attending university. My parents lived in the country so I had to get a place of my own. With university hours as they were, I found it hard to get an 'ordinary' job. Prostitution was a job where I could decide when I wanted to work.

I've never really looked on it as a career, merely a means to an end. Isn't most work like that for most people? I've done many jobs throughout my life: amusement park attendant, health educator, secretary. Prostitution has always been there to fill those economic gaps: in between jobs, when overheads are more than one income can support, when I'm travelling.

Travelling is when prostitution is particularly useful. I have been to several places in Europe and North America and worked to pay my way. It's difficult to make a lot of money from this because you don't know the scene. You can usually make enough to live on or complement your travel budget. You meet interesting people and get to see a certain, real side of life in the place you are visiting. It's ironic to me that the United Nations has had special resolutions against mobile prostitutes to 'protect' us from exploitation. Would I be less exploited if I had stayed in a boring job in my home town and never travelled? I don't think so.

Prostitution has also given me a chance to explore another part of my sexuality and to give opportunities for others to do the same. Anonymous sex is different to sex with emotional ties. It's not a question of one being better or worse. They are just different. Anonymous sex, paid or unpaid, is about yourself and about sex. That's why it's such a good opportunity for exploration of your own sexuality. Prostitution definitely hasn't affected my ability to be in a loving, monogamous relationship.

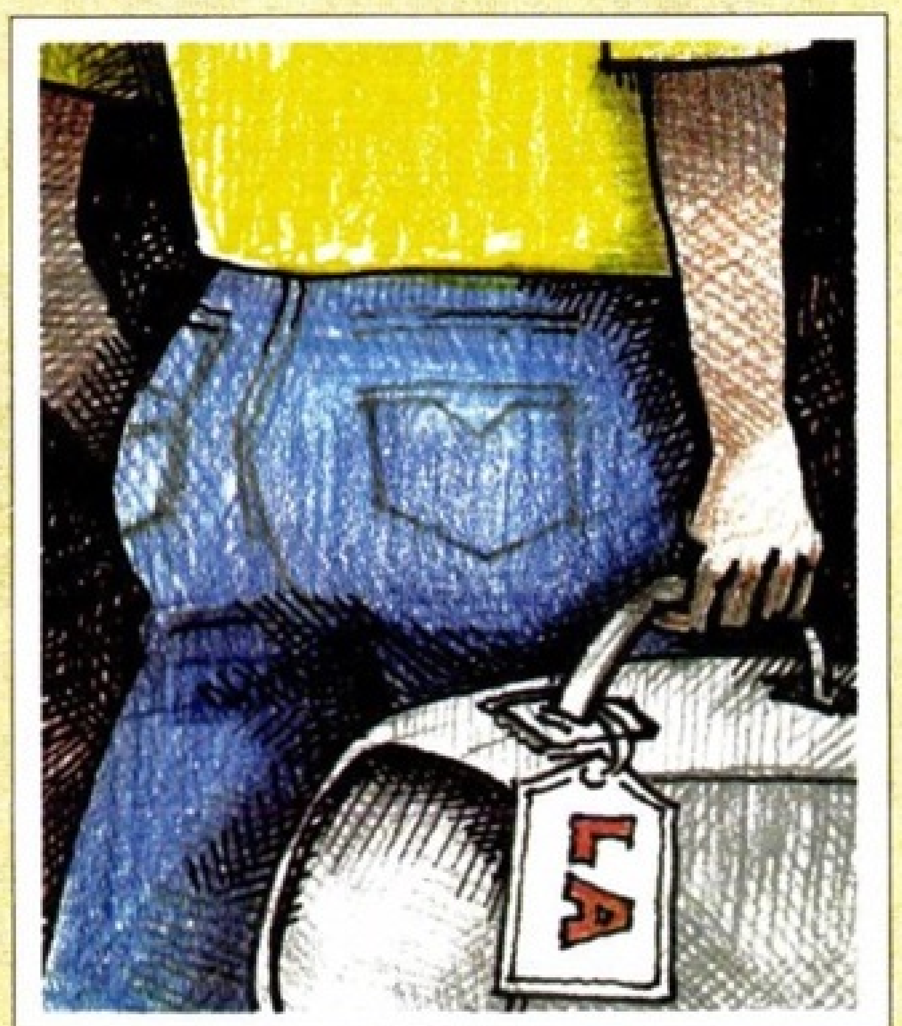


ILLUSTRATION: CLIVE OFFLEY

I have met some of my dearest and closest friends through the industry. There have been both good and bad times. I've most disliked working when I have been in the more controlled environments of brothels or escort agencies. It's the complete lack of industrial rights that I resent. Street work has always been my preference, or working independently from bars and clubs. I think it has been important for me to be in control of how, when and where I work.

Activism has been a big part of my life, special interest being taken, for obvious reasons, in the sex workers' rights movement. The futile attempts by governments to eradicate or control the industry anger me, especially at the times when I've paid taxes from my 'immoral' earnings. Being forced to move on when police decide to 'clean up' a street-working area just means a lot of hard work re-establishing a new beat. So it feels good to fight back against that. Prostitutes' rights activism is both fun (great colleagues) and useful personally because it gives meaning to working. In fact when I think about it the times I have found working most difficult were when I have been away from a political prostitutes' organization.

Brad Smith is now living in London.

Toy boys

A fantasy by ***Maureen Freely.***

Preliminary report to the Steering Committee of the Warrington Commission on Human Rights Violations in the Service Sector.

Informal account of mission to Willy-on-the-Wold Hospitality Centre (No 3295) by researcher No 387 on 6th May 2001.

Attn: Delmore Scott

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

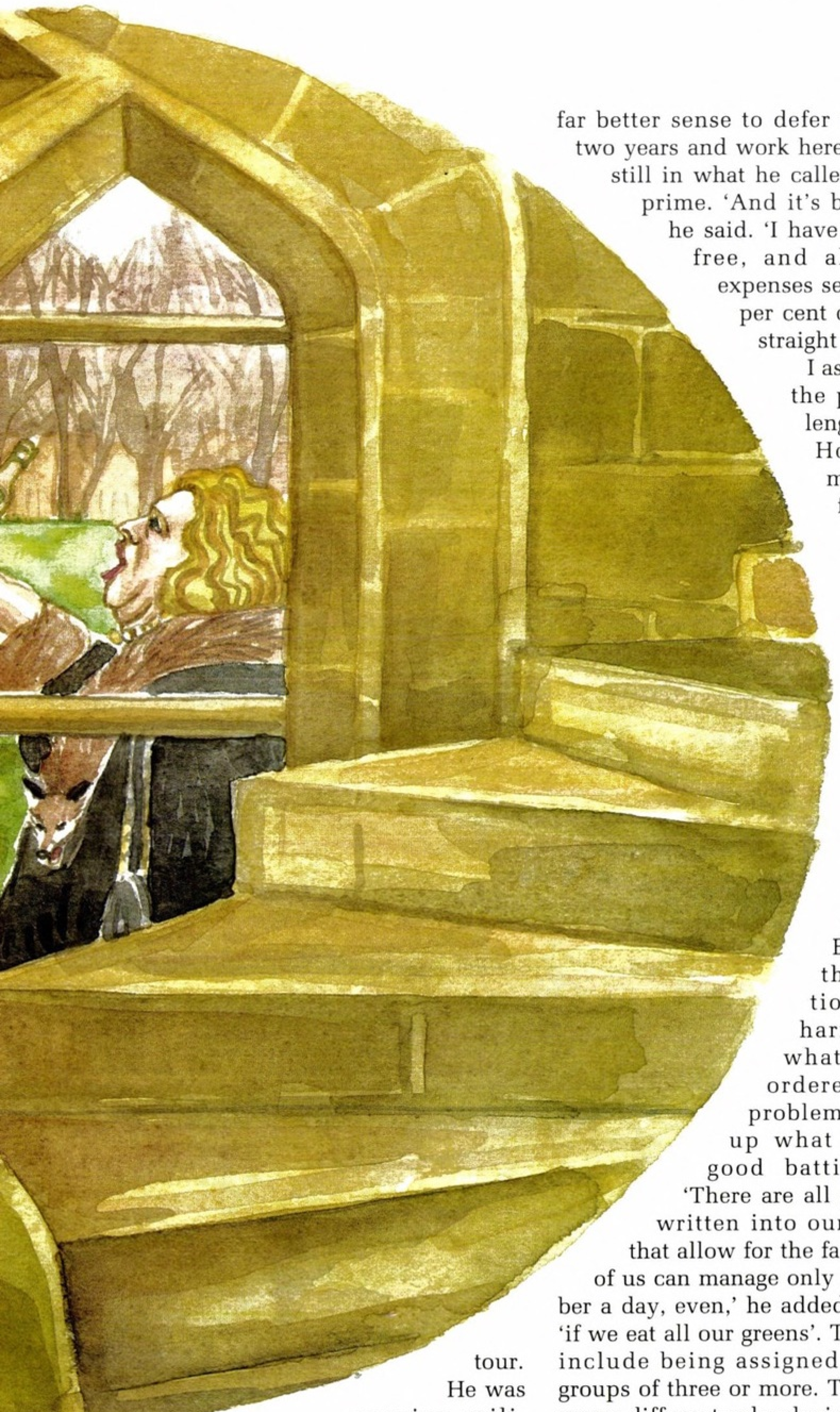
THE facility is housed in a converted manor that was, until the last election, a minor public school – a British term applying to private schools. Despite its changed circumstances, it retains an aura of privilege and tradition. The grounds are maintained to an impeccable standard. The beautiful stonework looks newly sandblasted, and there was not a stone out of place in the grand circular driveway. The carpark was packed with Volvos, BMWs, Espaces and Range Rovers. As for the crowd that was milling around the entrance...! A stranger could easily mistake the scene for a sports day or a prizegiving ceremony. A group of casually-but expensively-dressed women were discussing holiday plans. An assortment of small children played around the signs that asked them not to play on the grass. It was all as normal as could be... but for the fact that there were no fathers.

A white-haired, tweed-suited woman met me at the door and took me briskly through the dark main hall, which smelled of furniture polish, and into the cosy, carpeted office wing, which smelled of computer cleaning fluid. The manager was waiting for me in what must once have been the head's office. His dark suit and bland manner did not clash with the decor. He answered my general questions courteously. There were, he told me, 250 boys at the facility. Roughly half of them were weekly boarders. Admissions criteria were rigorous, and included a personal interview as well as a three-month battery of tests. All new entrants had to attend an induction course: there were, in addition, retreats and update training days for all senior boys. Hygiene was, of course, a priority, and discipline was strict, although it was controlled to a large degree by the boys themselves through a rotating system of patrols, monitors and prefects. Fagging had recently been banned and replaced with a 'big brother' scheme in which the onus was on the senior boy to be an advisor to the novice.

All boys were expected to play sport twice a week – here the manager directed my attention to the window. In the field beyond, a hundred or so matrons were boisterously supporting a muddy rugby match. 'As you can see,' he said, 'it's a great crowd-drawer. And it teaches the boys the lifelong value of teamwork, while at the same time addressing our most serious structural problems with regard to the male libido. The combination of fresh air, exercise and condoned aggression does wonders for them. They are then in a position to pass the benefit on to the client.'

He went on to prove his point with a rather alarming-looking sheath of computer printouts, which allegedly showed the exact degree to which his programme has stretched the boys' performances. 'We're not just for high-fliers, you know. We do believe the slower boys have something just as valuable to contribute. We do our best to bring out the artistic abilities of all our charges, even though this takes time and patience and a certain broad-mindedness. That's why we're so very alarmed at the Government's new league tables. There are certain very important factors they're just not measuring.'

'But this is something I would prefer you to see for yourself,' he said. With that, he took me off to the senior boys' common room, where he passed me over to Dean, the head prefect. Here again I suffered a piquant sense of déjà vu. Little had changed here since its previous incarnation. There were the battered lockers, the comfortable chairs and sofas that lacked some of their stuffing. The pool table. The smell of shoes. And now here I was, sitting with this affable young man with his bright eyes, fresh complexion, coltish smile and regulation haircut. His manners were more than good: he answered my questions quickly, respectfully and thoughtfully. Head prefect, indeed. I kept forgetting that I was a researcher here to inspect the world's newest profession. Everything I saw told me I was a prospective parent taking a



tour. He was wearing military camouflage. It was partly to fight off the lull I was falling into that I commented on his clothes. He explained that the facility offered a variation on the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. It was not all it might be, but he participated in it because it was going to look good on his CV when he applied to go to pilot school.

I asked him what the circumstances were that had brought him here. Without a moment's hesitation he said, 'money'. After watching his elder brother cripple himself financially with the loans he had to take out to pay for his university education and his elder sister suffer academically by trying to combine full-time schooling with a 40-hour-a-week waitressing job, he had decided that it made far better sense to defer university for two years and work here while he was still in what he called his libidinal prime. 'And it's been all right,' he said. 'I have my weekends free, and all my living expenses seen to. I put 85 per cent of my earnings straight into the bank.'

I asked him about the physical challenge of his work. How did he manage to perform consistently to standard? 'There are various mental tricks we are taught to play. All of them derive in some way from our reservoirs of natural aggression. But equally, the manifestations are either harmless or just what the client ordered.' A greater problem was keeping up what he called 'a good batting average'. 'There are all sorts of things written into our programmes that allow for the fact that the best of us can manage only a certain number a day, even,' he added with a laugh, 'if we eat all our greens'. These measures include being assigned to clients in groups of three or more. There were also many different role-playing formats that had proved popular and that involved 'more fantasy than action. Because, you see, most of the clients come for the taboo-breaking aspects more than for the actual physical outlet.'

What did he think of them – really? Dean shrugged his shoulders and we both gazed out of the window. It was, I now thought, a sorry sight. The women at the sidelines of the rugby match had become very rowdy indeed. Not only were they singing loud and tuneless rugby songs, they were brandishing whiskey bottles and throwing crisp packets and fire crackers onto the pitch. Is this what women became if afforded the luxury of turned tables? Dean, alas, seemed to accept the spectacle without question. 'I think clients are just normal women,' he said. 'Their problem is simply that they want a kind of sex that their husbands are either not willing or not able to provide. And some, of course, want sex without the strings attached, by which they seem to mean sex without having to put up with the same old boring act their husbands expect. A lot of them complain about how draining it is to have to pretend that they are silly or passive or pleasant or accommodating. Or always under the missionary, if you follow my meaning. This gives them a chance to overturn traditions – sometimes quite literally.'

Had his work changed his attitude to women? 'I have no trouble trusting the ones my age, but then you almost never find girls of my age coming to this type of facility. As for the next generation – well, let's just say that if I happen to be at a friend's house, and I seem to be making a hit with his or her mother, I don't go out of my way to linger in the kitchen.' He chuckled as he added that once or twice there had been a problem with a new friend's mother turning out to be 'someone I had already met under rather dramatically different circumstances'.

How had these women reacted? 'Not very well.'

Did he mind? 'I suppose I did in the beginning, but it is something we address routinely in our update training sessions and what have you. We have several names for the syndrome, all of which mirror the problem known as madonna/whore. One term is the toyboy/sugardaddy split. Another is rider/provider. It happens when a woman has a hard time accepting that a single person can play both parts, and it is a real problem. I have had friends whose girlfriends' families actively blocked their marriage plans. But I don't let it get to me. If someone can't accept me for who I am, then it's time to move on.'

'It's just a job, after all. I'm selling my body, not my soul. I take pride in my work – particularly my work as a health educator. I don't think that most of my clients had the faintest idea before they came here of the possibilities of the normal condom.' Here he stood up to bang on one of the white machines lining the wall that I had stupidly assumed were hand-driers, and treated me to a slightly alarming demonstration, the details of which I have decided are not necessarily relevant to this report. When, to my relief, he discarded his teaching aide and resumed his seat, he told me with considerable pride that he considered himself a footsoldier in the war against AIDS. 'I also think this job has been useful in

ILLUSTRATION: MIRIAM McCURDY

helping me to re-channel my sexual energy in the direction of those who most desperately need it. This also means when I go away at the weekend to see my own girlfriend, the last thing I want to do is... well, you can just imagine. I want to take it slow. You could even go so far as to call me the feminist's best friend.'

But was he? As encouraged as I ought to have been to find him so happy and apparently unexploited, I had a pang of regret about his ability to rise so blithely above the classic problems faced by women through the ages who have had to sell their bodies. Two episodes I witnessed on my way back to the car park reinforced this impression. One was a chance encounter as Dean led me down the main stairs. Another senior boy was climbing them with a client – presumably taking her up to a room. The client seemed flushed and uncomfortable. She kept asking the boy if he was sure 'this was all right'. The boy's reassurances were nothing if not patronizing. As he passed us, he gave Dean a knowing wink.

'Breaking in is hard to do,' was Dean's comment. 'But sometimes preferable to the end result.' This last comment was in reference to the scene that awaited us outside the front door. Five strapping boys were carrying one of the rowdy rugby supporters against her will in the direction of the car park. Laughing, Dean asked them what had happened. One responded with an obscene gesture, another shouted: 'Professional foul'. As I watched them proceed merrily onwards, I had my last, my saddest, and indeed my only authentic moment of déjà vu. Nothing had changed. The rules of prostitution had been turned on their head, but still it was the women who were being had, and the men who were on top. Even here, women were still being directed and disciplined by a different set of insider games devised by men. What I was witnessing was the old-boy network in its new disguise.

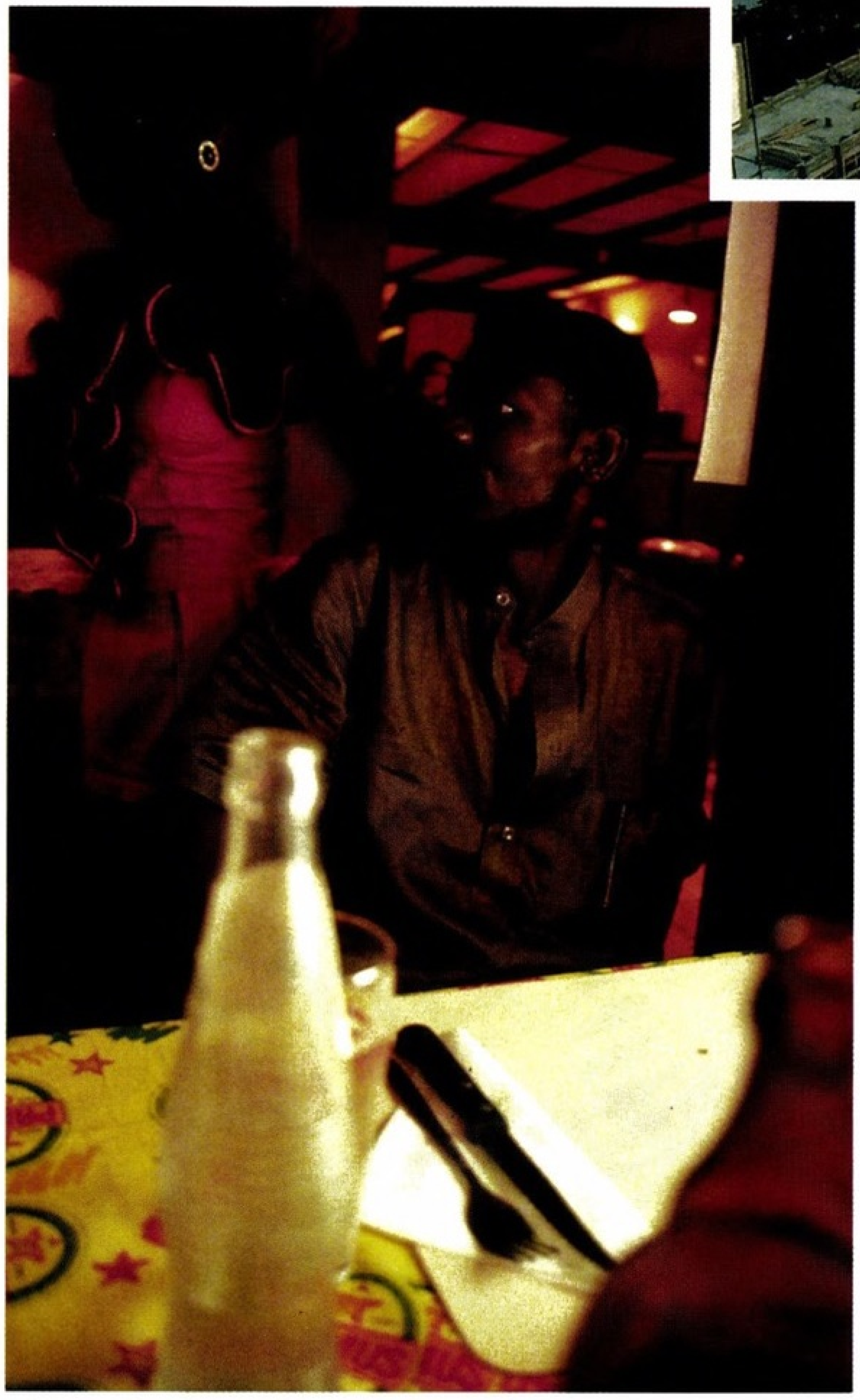
A final disturbing nuance, which you may or may not wish me to include. As we were standing by my car, Dean showed me a photograph of his girlfriend. For reasons that are now beyond me, I found myself asking how serious they were. Not very, he said. Although it was beyond the scope of our enquiry, I asked him why. He said it was because she was too much a woman of the world. He went on to be distressingly adamant about his determination to marry a virgin. ■

Maureen Freely is a North American novelist and journalist now living in Bath, UK. © Maureen Freely.

The money market

*Prostitution in Africa is becoming like prostitution everywhere else. But it was not always like that... **Oumar Tandia** points to another tradition and another prostitution altogether.*

BRUNO BARBEY / MAGNUM



ELI REED / MAGNUM

Selling sex in downtown Kinshasa: Linda strikes a deal (above). Big city, slim chances for rural women who come to Dakar (above right).

PROSTITUTION, it is said, is the oldest profession in the world. And Africa is the birthplace of humanity. It would therefore be logical to suppose that prostitution has existed in Africa since the beginning of time.

Surprisingly, then, prostitution as it is known today – selling sex for money – only appeared in Africa at the time of colonization. Before then, everything worked on an exchange basis. Even prostitution was part of an exchange: for food, protection or just for presents. In many villages in Africa this is still the case.

And today's sexual behaviour has to be judged in the context of such traditional norms. These vary considerably, even within one country. In Senegal, for example, you can find the *diola* woman, who often has one or two children before marriage, or the *bassari* woman, who sees it as her duty to spend the night with a guest in the village. In other ethnic groups throughout Africa the social system may be matriarchal, with women having greater responsibilities and therefore greater freedom in their lives.

But European-style, money-driven prostitution is now the dominant reality in Africa. To find out how the introduction of money into the sexual bargain – combined with the economic plight of the continent – has affected prostitution in Africa today, we should take a look at the life of a young woman called Hawa.

Hawa was married at the age of 14. Her husband worked in Dakar, the capital city of Senegal, while she lived with her three children in a village about 325 kilometres away. He sent her occasional financial support but it was not enough to help her and her family survive three crop failures in a row, and one day she decided to join him. At the age of 19 this was her chance to discover the joys of the big town.

Her dream turned to nightmare as she took the first tentative steps into her brave new world. Her husband, she found, didn't have secure employment. The arrival of Hawa and the three children simply made it more difficult to make ends meet. The final straw came when Hawa discovered that he had another child of 18 months, fruit of a liaison with a local girl.

When the divorce came through, Hawa trudged round the smart areas of town looking for work as a domestic servant. Then her youngest was struck down with tuberculosis. She turned to Marie, a sympathetic neighbour, for help, and one day Marie took her to visit 'friends' who would help her to buy medicines for her little girl...

One thing led to another, and Hawa fell in love with her first client. Pregnancy was followed by an illegal abortion. She finally obtained her prostitute's ID card by sleeping with the local policeman.

In every big town in Africa there are thousands of people like Hawa. The majority of them only prostitute themselves because they can find no other way of earning money. 'We are nothing but *Khoosloman*.* Like everyone else we try to bring a smile to the faces of our families... but no-one ever thinks of us,' said one woman. Prostitutes are also subject to enormous pressure from religious culture, whether Islamic or Catholic, which seeks to prohibit prostitution and forbid unions outside marriage. In this way they try to ensure that patriarchal infrastructures remain in place.

The situation of prostitutes in Africa reflects the economic situation of the whole continent. The crisis which has marked the recent history of Third World countries has had serious consequences for their peoples. Whole swathes of the population have been installed in the informal – and unstable – economy and have become part of that sector of society which only just manages to get by.

So would prostitution disappear if the economic climate improved? Certainly not in the foreseeable future, and anyway eradication is not the issue. The urgent issue today is to ensure that prostitutes in Africa can avoid the many risks and potential tragedies that face them. These risks have been heightened by the menace of AIDS. As one woman put it: 'AIDS has made everyone afraid... it has made our lives more difficult. We are losing more and more clients.'

In many countries in Africa prostitutes are coming together to try and discuss these problems. In Senegal, for example, our organization, ENDA, has formed a group to arm prostitutes with the tools which will enable them to educate others about safe sex. Similar debates are taking place throughout Africa – in Cameroon, Zaire, Uganda and Mali. For the first time recently, prostitutes from different African countries were able to meet at a conference in Cameroon and the idea of a pan-African organization of prostitutes was born. It has yet to happen, but it might provide a way forward for people like Hawa. ■

Oumar Tandia works for ENDA *(Environnement et Developpment du Tiers-Monde)* in Senegal.

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* *Khoosloman* is a *wolof* word meaning 'a poor person struggling to survive'.

The mask

THE lipstick has been put on. My mouth should now stand out from a distance. One more last check to make sure. Eyes look clear and very alert. The shiny patches have all been covered.

My hour-long ritual has come to its conclusion. Tonight is the night, not unlike any other. Not too cold, just a wee bit overcast. Maybe a small crop jac
et, it's enough. All se
ready to move. One mo
last glance for good me
sure. My mask is firmly
place, the wall is up.

Driving to my destin
tion for the night, I pu
the nagging worries of t
day away. Feelings
gone, just a shell le
Ready to be anyone's fa
tasy or thrill.

I step from my car a
am bombarded with t
sounds of the city nig
Same people here tonig
as last night. I take
usual pew, smile at aut
matic intervals to tempt the passer-by. I am a seller looking only to make a living. Idle conversation with others in the same line as me helps pass the slow hours that seem to drag. Finally, a client who has enough coin. Terms discussed, money changed hands. The mask has not wavered throughout this job.

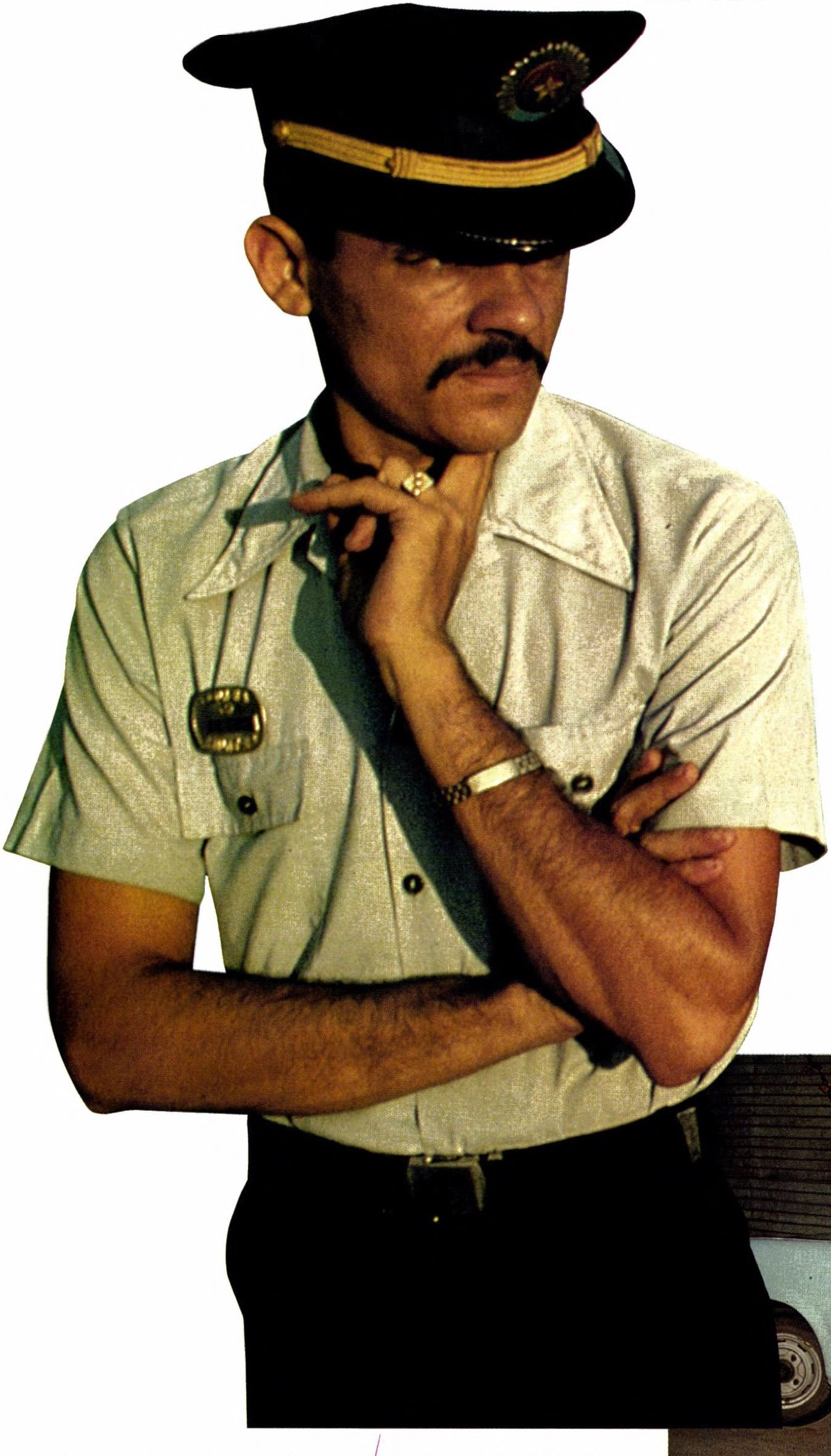
Back at the familiar cafe on my familiar pew. Richer now than I was a few short minutes ago. My mask has done its job once again. Come away from this interlude with no major dents or scratches. The empty feeling I can push away, just block it out and think of the money.

Had enough tonight and ready to depart. My purse is full from tonight's escapade. No hassles, just a bit weary. My mask is coming unstuck the closer to home I get. My lipstick has become dry and the foundation has gone blotchy. Soaking in a hot bath has become my number one ambition. Just to feel the hot water against my work-sore body is absolute bliss. Feeling the water makes the barriers slowly subside, my mask also fades away within a moment.

All the falseness gone, I find myself again. My night-time personality has been safely put back on the shelf until it is needed on another night. When I look in the mirror just before bed I don't see the work self that so many other people know. I just see me. No masks – just me. I am a normal human being; I haven't got horns or hooves. People see me as just a street worker. I am not real. I am looked down upon by people that don't know; they think I'm dirty and carry diseases, but I don't. Just because I work on the streets doesn't mean that I am any different. My job is a job, it's not me. Maybe one day people will understand this.

ILLUSTRATION: CLIVE OFFLEY

The Mask is taken from *Siren*, the magazine of the **New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective.**



Unfair cop

*The law is meant to protect the citizen from violence and abuse. But what if that citizen happens to be a prostitute? **Cheryl Overs** uncovers a worldwide scandal.*

BOTH PHOTOS: BRUNO BARBEY / MAGNUM

Touting for Trabi trade: business booms in Berlin.

AN Australian policeman provided me with one of the best descriptions of prostitution law. Policing the sex industry, he said, was like pushing on a waterbed. Push in one place and it simply came up again in the other.

This is the same the world over – the only variation being how the pushing is done.

In most countries police tend to use more 'discretion' in dealing with 'vice' as opposed to 'hard' crimes. This may sometimes mean they act reasonably and within the law.

But it can also mean they make arbitrary decisions. 'Arbitrary decision-making' is often a euphemism for some appalling acts. Take the murder of prostitutes in Latin America, for example, or the execution of HIV-positive sex workers in Burma.

Even in so-called democratic countries the list of mundane abuses against prostitutes carried out by the authorities will include raids, rapes, beatings, extortion, 'confiscation' of property and compulsory medical intervention.

Not unnaturally, the law is feared and mistrusted everywhere by people in the sex industry and those who live or work alongside it. The more visible the prostitution, the more vulnerable workers are to harassment and abuse.

Street prostitution is illegal in most countries, so those engaged in it are more likely targets for police attention than those who work for escort agencies, which are usually legal. Most prostitutes who work illegally don't do it just for the hell of it. Often they are unable to secure or maintain a position in a legal workplace such as an escort agency or a legal brothel. Those who cannot work legally are often the most vulnerable members of a society – they may be young, homeless, on drugs, transsexual. Many will be migrant workers or illegal immigrants.

The risks they run are increased by the law and its enforcers. For example, if there is a strong chance of a prostitute getting arrested while working on the street, then the prostitute will choose a remote place, even if it is more dangerous. If the police are likely to arrive at any moment the negotiation process with the client has to be quick. It is at this point that street workers make vital decisions about their safety and must at the same time negotiate prices, condom use, and what services are on offer.

Generally speaking, the safer the work conditions, the less you earn. Bar workers pay a high price for the protection of the bar, both in cash to proprietors and in the health implications of compulsory drinking. Escort agencies are dangerous for all but the most experienced because you have to go unaccompanied to strange places. Working from home is a solution in some countries although it is obviously a compromise to forfeit privacy and possibly safety as well.

The question of where to have sex is often tricky. In many countries there are laws aimed at preventing sex workers from renting hotel rooms. Because it's risky, hotel owners charge prostitutes exorbitant prices.

Otherwise, sex can be had in lanes or cars. Utrecht in the Netherlands has gone so far as to build special car-parking bays for prostitutes and clients! But there's no running water in cars and light is often limited, which is not good for condom use. Also, the outside of the car is a short push away – and that is where many prostitutes end up, on the ground, minus money after they have completed their side of the deal.

If they are then arrested they have to go through a degrading process of being taken to the police station, charged and fingerprinted – a process often made worse by police attitudes. This may be followed by a court appearance and a fine. And to pay the fine the prostitute goes back on the street – or she has the option of going to prison.

There are lasting and pervasive implications for convicted prostitutes living in countries where criminal records are efficiently kept. A prostitute may lose her right to travel and education. She may lose employment, housing, welfare benefits. And because of the 'moral' nature of the crime she may lose child custody rights too.

So, to avoid prosecution, many people prefer to work in 'fronts' for prostitution. But these can have disadvantages too. If a massage parlour worker is abused by her employer she is the one likely to be arrested for her 'criminal' activity.

Bars, saunas and massage parlours are often sleazy and unhygienic places to work in, not because prostitutes and their clients like it that way, but because investing capital in illegal or quasi-legal ventures is risky, especially where there are fierce laws which enable the state to confiscate property belonging to prostitutes.

One of the most notorious by-products of quasi-legality is police corruption. Bribes paid to police come directly or indirectly from the prostitute's pocket, who may also have to render free services.

But legal brothels are not always a better option. Conditions are usually appalling and the pay low. There are no enforceable codes of work practice, no legal rights against employers and little protection from violence. Unnecessary medical testing is often compulsory in an ill-informed attempt to provide a 'clean product' to men of unknown health status. The ranch brothels of Nevada are famous for stripping their 'inmates' of every possible human and industrial right, while in Turkey many of the women are unable to leave the brothels

The mother

I was married before I left school, and pregnant within a year. I think it was in 1972, and I couldn't have been more than 15 at the time.

For some time after my son was born, things were all right. I worked as a housemaid in several houses and brought home some money. But then my husband, who didn't have a steady job, started to drink a lot. He used to beat and abuse me. Most days we didn't have enough money for food.

Then I had a second child, a daughter, who got polio. My husband's behaviour didn't get any better. Finally, after seven years, I could take it no longer. I began to spend more and more time with my mother, who had a brothel in Kamathipura, Bombay's largest red-light district.

ILLUSTRATION: CLIVE OFFLEY

They say that every woman's story is like her mother's story. My family is from Solapur – a district in Maharashtra – and my mother used to be the main earner in the family because my father had a stroke. Then he died and she came to Bombay. She sold old bottles and papers and often used to come to Kamathipura. That's how she got into the trade and took a house on rent.

As a child, I used to visit my mother. But when I grew older and was able to understand what was going on, she stopped me coming. She did everything for us, sent us money, sent me and my brothers to school. Whenever I ran away from my husband, she tried to send me back to my married home. But there comes a time when you know that things won't get better. So I began to live here too, with my children.

It was strange at the beginning. I didn't know how I would be able to accept living like this. But I got used to it and the years have gone by. I have five or six girls in my house; they are from villages in Maharashtra and Karnataka. I am a mother, a sister and a friend to my girls.

It was difficult for me to get into the business myself. I didn't want to at first because the men often get drunk and shout at the girls. As the head of the house I have my self-respect to think of. But now I receive customers at times.

The men who come here are of all sorts. They are *havaldars* (police constables), labourers, office sahibs. The policemen are the worst. They are nothing but pimps themselves. Some of the regulars bring us gifts, like saris, soap, talcum powder.

Here in my house we have always asked the men to use rubber, AIDS or no AIDS. Some of them still refuse. But business is down to half these days because of AIDS and the communal riots a year ago. We are lucky if we make 200 rupees a day (about $6).

I often think of doing something else to earn a living. But where can I go? I have an old mother, and can't leave her here. My son is 17, doesn't go to school and has no job. I have to make enough money to feed the three of us. I sometimes think of going away but then my house is here. Where else will I find one in Bombay?

But I will never allow my daughter to enter this business. She comes here from Solapur when she has had a fight with her husband, but I always send her back. She doesn't like village life. She wants to wear make-up and bright clips in her hair and live in the city.

There have been so many men who have come and gone, but they are all the same. Look at the men who come here. They are married but they leave their wives to spend nights with these girls.

Whether you are here or anywhere else, your life is ultimately tied up with men. If they are good and kind, they are like trees, and you can spend your life under their shade. Otherwise you have to snatch at whatever they give you. But they always betray you.

The brothel-owner was interviewed by **Bharati Sadasivam**, a journalist for the *Times of India*.

they work in because they are deeply in debt to the owner.

Better examples do exist, though. In Australia, for instance, the legalization of prostitution saw the creation of brothels with standards equal to five-star hotels, though even here industrial rights still leave much to be desired.

There are, of course, plenty of models for improving the sex industry. All you have to do is look at some of the parallels in other industries. Gyms have showers and spas – showers and spas in the commercial sex establishments should be subject to the same regulations. Planning law governs opening hours, appearance of buildings, their location and the number of staff and customers appropriate for the placement of the business. No legislation specific to prostitution needs to be in force to enable all these normal laws to apply. All that is needed is removal of the criminal laws and a policy of equality, so that the sex industry is not routinely refused planning permission or over-zealously taxed. The sex industry could easily be facilitated in the same ways and by the same laws that govern other industries.

The challenge is to avoid reworking into new laws the assumption that prostitution is a 'bad thing' which should be discouraged. The key to change is consultation with prostitutes and clients rather than pontification from isolated and political places. That is one of the reasons why prostitutes' self-governing organizations are so important and why they should be resourced and listened to.

HONEY SALVADORI / NETWORK

Creature comforts: running a business from home has its advantages.

One of the main obstacles facing decriminalization campaigners is that whenever legislators address the issue of exploitation of prostitutes, they immediately think of pimps – or the 'pimp problem' as they prefer to call it. They then set about dreaming up laws against pimping. What they fail to see is that pimping is a product of anti-whore laws and that if these laws were abolished prostitutes would be able to sell services in the way that anyone else does and enjoy the same protection in law.

Legislating against the pimps is – as one activist put it – like 'attacking the vultures who pick the flesh off dead bodies... it only makes them fiercer. It also nets many of the wrong people. The government needs to remove the reasons why the dead bodies are there in the first place – the anti-whore laws.'

I recently heard a politician compare prostitution to prison – it doesn't bring in any votes. The only vote prostitutes have is with their feet. Where the sex industry is badly managed – as it inevitably is by the law – prostitutes use this vote by refusing to work where it is legally sanctioned. The chaos which ensues, the 'problem' of prostitution, is the result of ordinary people with a living to make responding to bad management.

The challenge for legislators is to come up with a plan which enables prostitution to operate safely and inoffensively. And planning is essential – rather than leaving the regulation of the commerce of prostitution to the whims and 'discretion' of those pushing on the waterbed. ■

Cheryl Overs is a consultant on sexual health in the sex industry.

Worth reading on... PROSTITUTION

A Vindication of the Rights of Whores, edited by Gail Pheterson (Seal Press 1989). An anthology from the International Movement for Prostitutes' Rights which gives an overview of 15 years of activism by prostitutes themselves. Some of the detail on the conferences is a bit tedious, but it does give an insight into the problems that face prostitutes in coming together. Includes the proceedings and results of the two Whores' Congresses.

Female Sexual Slavery, by Kathleen Barry (New York University Press 1984). The book which started the debate on 'forced' prostitution. It is a well-researched academic treatise, covering all the sexual aspects of women's lives. Some of the material is harrowing.

Good Girls, Bad Girls: sex trade workers and feminists face-to-face, edited by Laurie Bell (The Women's Press 1987). A book which grew out of a meeting between feminists and prostitutes. Using articles and interviews, it gives and honest and sometimes painful analysis of the issues that divide the two factions.

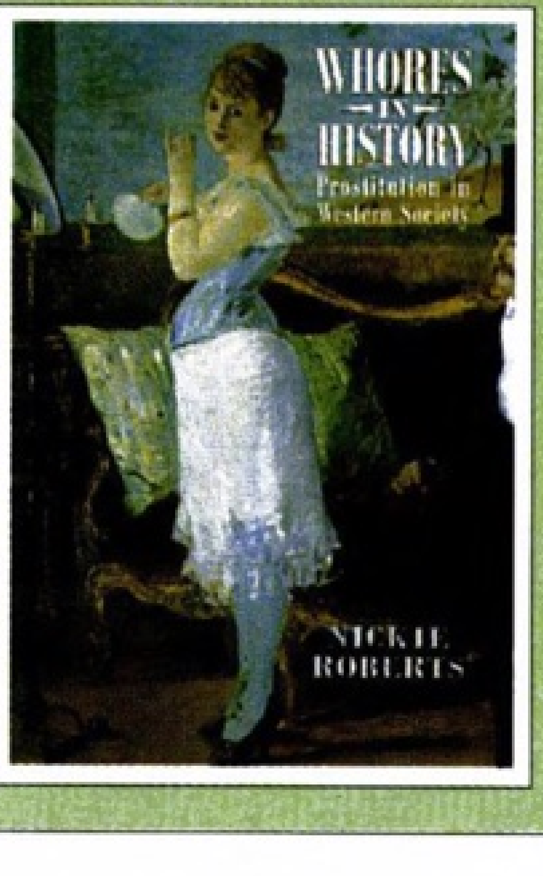
Let the Good Times Roll: prostitution and the US military in Asia, by Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus (CIIR/The New Press 1993). This book combines an excellent analysis of prostitution on US bases in the Philippines with a series of long and fascinating interviews with prostitutes about their lives, their families, their hopes and their fears.

On the Fringes of the Sex Industry: child workers in hotels, catering and tourism. (working title) A report by Maggie Black (International Labour Organization 1994). Setting child prostitution in the context of child labour, this report presents a detailed expansion of the challenging arguments set out in this magazine.

Prostitution: what's love got to do with it? by Allegra Taylor (Macdonald Optima 1991). A first-person tour of the sex industry in the UK by someone who is not a prostitute. A readable, sympathetic and witty introduction to the subject.

Sex Work: writings by women in the sex industry, edited by Frédérique Delacoste and Priscilla Alexander (Virago 1988). An anthology of articles, poems and stories which gives an excellent overview of what women in the pro-prostitution camp are thinking.

Whores in History by Nickie Roberts (Harper-Collins 1992). A large book which starts from the prostitute's point of view. It traces the history of prostitution, and the stigma against it, from earliest times to the present day. Well-researched and packed with fascinating quotes from a variety of sources, it is difficult to put down.



Prostitutes' Organizations :

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND: NZPC (New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective), PO Box 11-412, Mannera Street, Wellington.

AUSTRALIA: Australian Prostitutes Collective, PO Box 470, Kings Cross 2011, Sydney.

BRAZIL: Pegação, Rua Visconde de Pirajá. 127/201, 22410-001 Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro.

CANADA: CORP (Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes), PO Box 1143, Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2T8.

THAILAND: ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism), PO Box 178, Klongchan, Bangkok, 10240. Also has national groups in Western countries.

Empower, PO Box 1065, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504. Works with women in the entertainment industry.

THE NETHERLANDS: ICPR (International Committee on Prostitutes' Rights), Postbus 725, 1000 AS Amsterdam.

Mr A de Graaf Stichting, Westermarkt 4, 1016 DK Amsterdam. A comprehensive documentation centre.

SENEGAL: ENDA-SYNFEV, BP 3370, Dakar. Works with prostitutes in Senegal.

UK: ECP (English Collective of Prostitutes), PO Box 287, London NW6 5QU.

US: COYOTE, Box 6297, San Francisco, California 94101-6297.

PANAMA

Blades runner

Salsa star stands for president

GILLES PERESS / MAGNUM

Blades: passionate political concerns.

PANAMANIAN salsa star Ruben Blades, 45, is running for president in May 1994 elections intended to seal the Central American nation's transition from dictatorship to democracy.

The Harvard-educated singer, who popularized the Caribbean-beat salsa sound the world over, has led every opinion poll, normally scoring twice as much as his nearest rivals. And the grassroots Papa Egoro movement he founded in 1991 – named after a Panamanian Embera Indian term equivalent to 'Mother Earth' – has risen from obscurity to be the second most popular party in Panama.

'I think that people are so disappointed with the traditional forms of politics that they're – we're all – turning to outsiders,' says Blades. His popularity has stunned Panama's mainstream politicians, who are used to rotating power among a few well-entrenched oligarchies.

But it has delighted ordinary Panamanians who worship his music, and the media who have compared him to other political outsiders such as Ross Perot (US), Alberto Fujimori (Peru) and Våclav Hável (Czech Republic).

Blades was born the son of a Panamanian musician-turned-police-detective in a poor neighbourhood of Panama City – a stone's throw from the presidential Palace of Herons he hopes to occupy. He left for the US in 1975 'with $100 in my pocket' and is now an international star with several albums, concerts and Hollywood film roles to his credit.

His passionate political concerns have underpinned many of his songs, most notably *Tiburon*, or 'Shark', which attacks US imperialism in Latin America, and *El Padre Antonio*, a eulogy for Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero who was murdered in 1980 in the early days of El Salvador's civil war.

Should he triumph on 8 May, Blades has pledged to reverse the current government's emphasis on paying Panama's $6 billion foreign debt – the highest per capita debt in Latin America – and to tackle poverty, corruption and bureaucracy. He also wants a radical overhaul of Panama's ailing health, education, judicial and infrastructure systems based on grassroots consultation, province by province.

Blades' biggest potential vote-loser is undoubtedly his 18-year absence from Panama – particularly on the night of 30 December, 1989, when 27,000 US soldiers launched an invasion which devastated parts of Panama City and left hundreds, possibly thousands, dead. ■

Andrew Cawthorne

Uncovering Cousteau

A new biography of famed oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau by Bernard Violet asserts that he is not quite the champion of wildlife and the environment that he is made out to be. For example, an offshore bauxite-dumping site that fouls the fishing waters near Marseilles was approved some 30 years ago by the French Underwater Research Office – then headed by Cousteau. The book alleges that he mistreats animals to re-create scenes in his movies. It also says that he has long-standing ties with the French Navy and provided scuba gear from one of his companies, Spirotechnique, to the commandos who blew up the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in New Zealand, killing a photographer.

World Press Review, vol 40, no 8.

ROMUALD MEIGNEUX / CAMERA PRESS

That's GATT

On 14 December 1993 the presses started printing the 'final agreement' as soon as the European Union (EU) and the US shook hands on the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Seven years of negotiation had reached a triumphant conclusion – but no-one had consulted the 100 or so other countries that are supposed to be parties to GATT. 'The biggest trade deal in history' was done without reference to the two most intractable economic issues facing the world: the North/South divide and environmental constraints. Commodity prices are expected to keep falling, which will cost Africa about three billion dollars a year and increase environmental destruction worldwide. The poorest members of the Lomé Convention (most of them former European colonies in Africa) will lose out when it is replaced by GATT. New 'intellectual property' provisions will increase payments for patents from South to North and legitimize the claims by multinational corporations over genetic material taken from the South without payment. A deal that will deepen the North/South divide and promote environmental destruction was nonetheless greeted with euphoria on the world's financial markets.

David Ransom

C. WARD / CAMERA PRESS

Dwindling rhino

The Environmental Investigation Agency has been checking out the trade in rhino horn in South-east Asia. In China, posing as dealers, an undercover team found and filmed the largest stockpile of rhino horn yet seen, representing some 400 dead rhinos – more than are currently alive in Zimbabwe. A Chinese government official tried to sell the horn to them and offered a military escort to Hong Kong. In Taiwan rhino horn was readily available in 19 out of 24 pharmacies surveyed, and in 59 out of 90 pharmacies in Hong Kong. Although the UN is exerting pressure to stop the trade, until these countries cease to import rhino horn poaching will continue. In Zimbabwe non-governmental organizations frustrated by the cuts in funding to national parks by the government have also withdrawn their support. The immediate result has been the slaughter, since August 1993, of between 40 and 60 white rhinos in Hwange National Park, reducing the park's population to just two animals.

Environmental Investigation Agency

FAIR TRADE

ALISTAIR SMITH / CHANTAL FINNEY

Picker-packers won't take market forces lying down.

Bent business

Banana farmers square up to fruit companies

A NEW regime introduced for bananas by the European Union* in July 1993 is costing tens of thousands of plantation workers their livelihoods and bringing to the boil simmering conflicts in the industry.

Farmers' actions in Martinique, Ecuador, Panama and – most recently – St Lucia have revealed a growing resistance to abuse by the powerful forces driving the banana trade. On 5 October 1993 two St Lucian farmers were killed by a government paramilitary unit. Many more were tear-gassed as they tried to blockade the centre of the capital, Castries. Prices had fallen to around 60 per cent of the costs of production. Their monopoly exporter, Geest, was rumoured to be preparing to quit.

Under the new regime of EU 'tariff quotas' the first two million tonnes of Latin American and Filipino bananas are subject to a tax of $112 per tonne. After that there is a punitive tariff of $952 per tonne. There is no tariff at all on exports from former European colonies in the ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) group of countries.

The big multinational companies that control the banana trade are angry. The US-based companies Chiquita, Dole and Del Monte backed five Latin American governments in taking their case to the world trade regulating body, GATT, which ruled that the EU would have to make changes.

But the big fruit companies are also to blame for their problems. They miscalculated badly when they greatly increased capacity, presuming that the Single European Market – which came into operation in January 1993 – would reduce tariff barriers against non-ACP members. The UK-based giant Geest set about clear-felling Costa Rican forests for new plantations. But the trade barriers against non-ACP members stayed in place, overproduction saturated the market and the international price of bananas came spiralling down.

Banana workers have not been taking all this lying down. A mass mobilization of trade unionists, environmentalists, peasant-farmers and churchgoers in the streets of San José in Costa Rica in October 1992 caused the companies to pause in their socially and ecologicallydestructive drive for 'new pastures'. Honduran plantation workers have secured compensation for cumulative damage from dangerous chemicals used in the drive to boost production – 6,000 now-sterile Costa Rican workers have cases pending in the US.

But attempts to cultivate 'organic' fruit with a low input of fertilizers and agricultural chemicals have been blocked by banana companies. In Costa Rica the giant Dole fruit company produced a false title deed to 70 hectares of plantation where the banana workers' union was about to use organic methods.

Good organization on the ground, networking between regions and concerted pressure from consumers and producers will be needed to build a banana trade based on new principles. There is nothing utopian about this: Filipino banana producers and Japanese consumers have already set up a partnership based on fair remuneration, social justice and ecological sustainability. ■

Alistair Smith and Chantal Finney

*The video **El Mundo Curvo del Banano*** (with subtitles in English) is available from Farmer's Link, 38 Exchange Street, Norwich NR2 1AX, UK, price £10.00 – £7.50 goes to the Plantation Workers' Union.

** Following ratification of the Maastricht Treaty the European Community (EC) has now become the European Union (EU).*

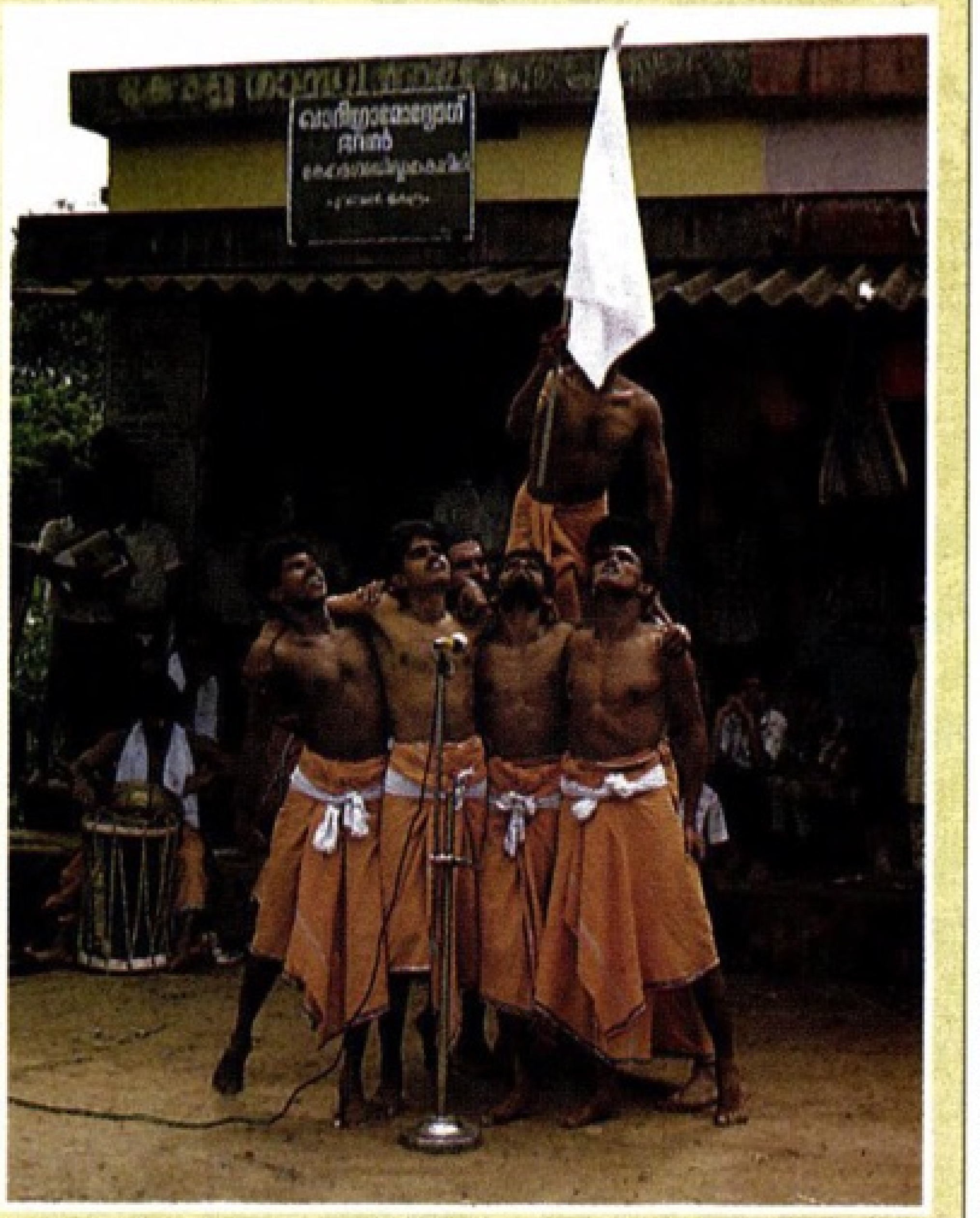
Fundamentalists beaten

An Indian General Election is one of the greatest shows on earth. But this time, with the Assembly elections of November 1993, the electorate took everyone for a massive ride. The predictions everywhere were dismal – the Hindu fundamentalist BJP, a party committed to turning India into a fascist state dominated by the politics of communal hatred, would win. It was what the masses wanted, the political pundits agreed. Even the staunchest secularists nodded sadly in agreement.

But the Indian masses – illiterate, divided by caste and creed – voted. And they voted for a secular, non-communal, decent India, exactly a year after the country was shocked by the demolition of the *Babri Masjid* – the Ayodhya Mosque.

N Ram, editor of *Frontline*, a leading national magazine, summed it up succinctly: 'The most important thing is not who has won (although that is somewhat important) but who has lost'.

And the BJP has lost – there are no two ways about it. The BJP declared that the election results would constitute a referendum on its politics and ideology. Furthermore, the elections were in the states of the Hindi heartland, considered the most important region electorally. The rout was in three states where the BJP held power – the place where *Ramjanmabhoomi* (a resonant term used by orthodox Hindus for the birthplace of the god Ram) was to be re-established.



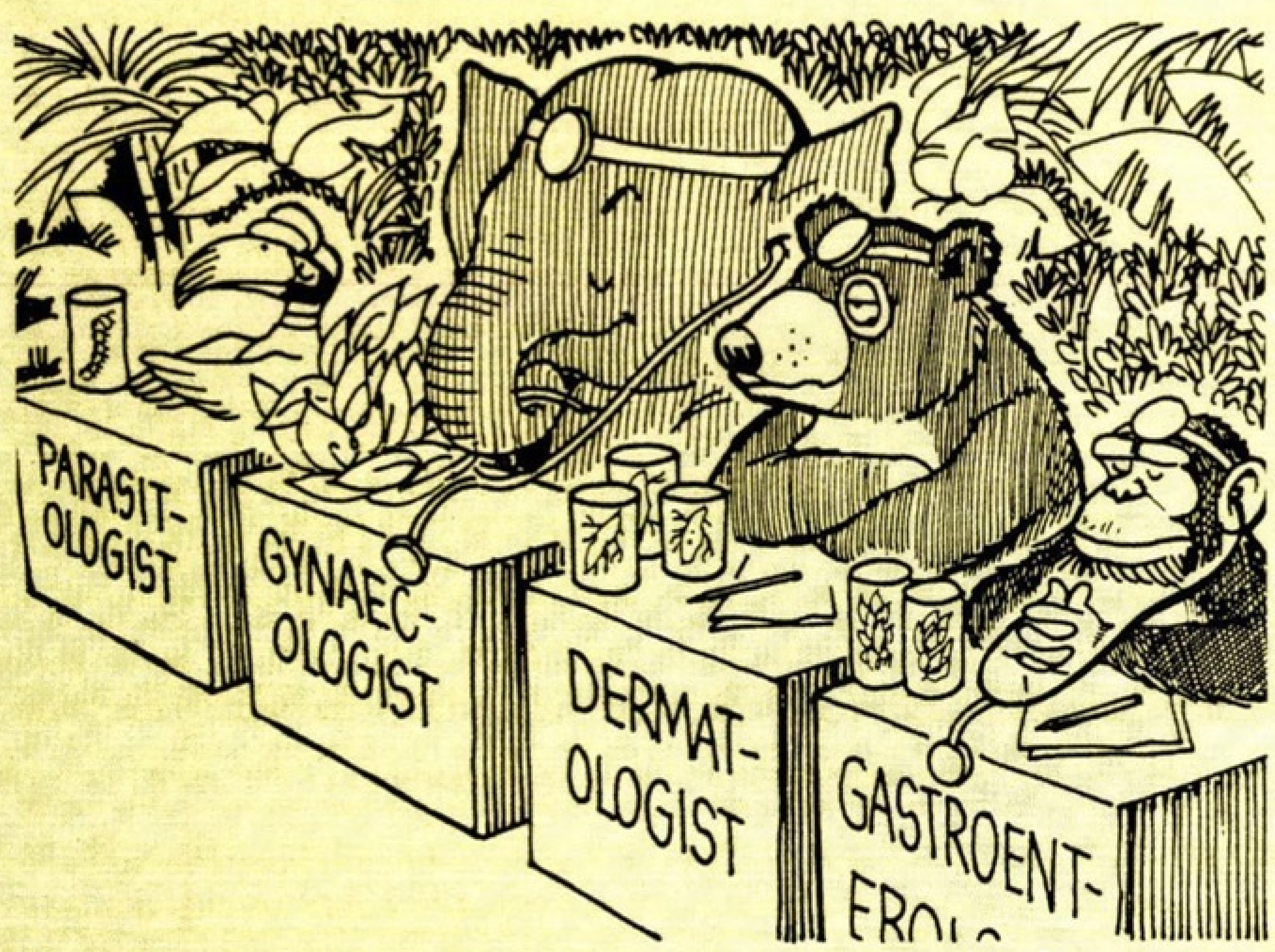
VANESSA BAIRD

Anti-fundamentalists get together in Kerala.

Instead the people voted into power two champions of the 'backward' classes who espouse a tough brand of secularism. Kanshi Ram made the irreverent suggestion that 'the best solution for the Ayodhya dispute is to build a public toilet on the disputed site'. A gutsy election Commissioner, Seehan, ensured fair and free elections in all the states concerned. For once there were no strong-arm tactics, no bullying or brow-beating.

And so the voice of the people has been heard. It's been a vote for secularism, and it gives the country more reason for hope than has been possible for some time.

Mari Marcel Thekaekara



AJIT NINAN

Animal testing

Zoopharmacognosy is a new area of study concerned with animals' self-medicating behaviour. The findings speak for themselves.

Birds in the Amazonian forests eat toxic caterpillars to protect themselves against parasites. Chimpanzees eat *Aspilia* leaves containing anti-fungal, anti-viral and anti-parasitic compounds first thing each morning. A Tanzanian park ranger saw an ill chimpanzee who had lost her appetite chew shoots of the bitter Vernonia amygdalina plant. The plant is traditionally prescribed by herbal healers of several African tribes and has several anti-parasitic properties, including against amoebic dysentery, malaria, schistomiasis and leishmanaiasis. Pregnant elephant cows eat a particular species of plant a few days before giving birth and often local people use it to assist human deliveries. Navajo elders recall how bears instructed them to use a forest root against insects. Bears use the root – known as *osha* or bear root (Lingusticum) – spreading the juice on their body to ward off insects and swallowing it for treating stomach problems and parasites. Pharmacological analysis has revealed it contains compounds active against fungi and insects. Scientists hope that studying such animal behaviour will narrow down their search for useful plants.

Down to Earth, Vol 2, No 13

LIBERIA

Class war

Indefinite detention for child warriors

THE civil war that has been raging in Liberia since 1989 (when the autocratic President Samuel Doe was ousted) is taking its unfair share of casualties from the civilian population. In the first year of the fighting 10,000 children were orphaned or homeless in the capital Monrovia. Famine claims about 500 children weekly and more than 200,000 people face starvation in the country.

Among the warring factions is an armed alliance of West African nations – Ecomog – which entered as peacekeepers but now plays a combat role. It has also become a key player in the continued imprisonment of child prisoners of war (POWs). Children have been enlisting to fight because they have no choice but to join or be shot, or because enlisting can be the only means of getting food. Some join to avenge the deaths of family members.

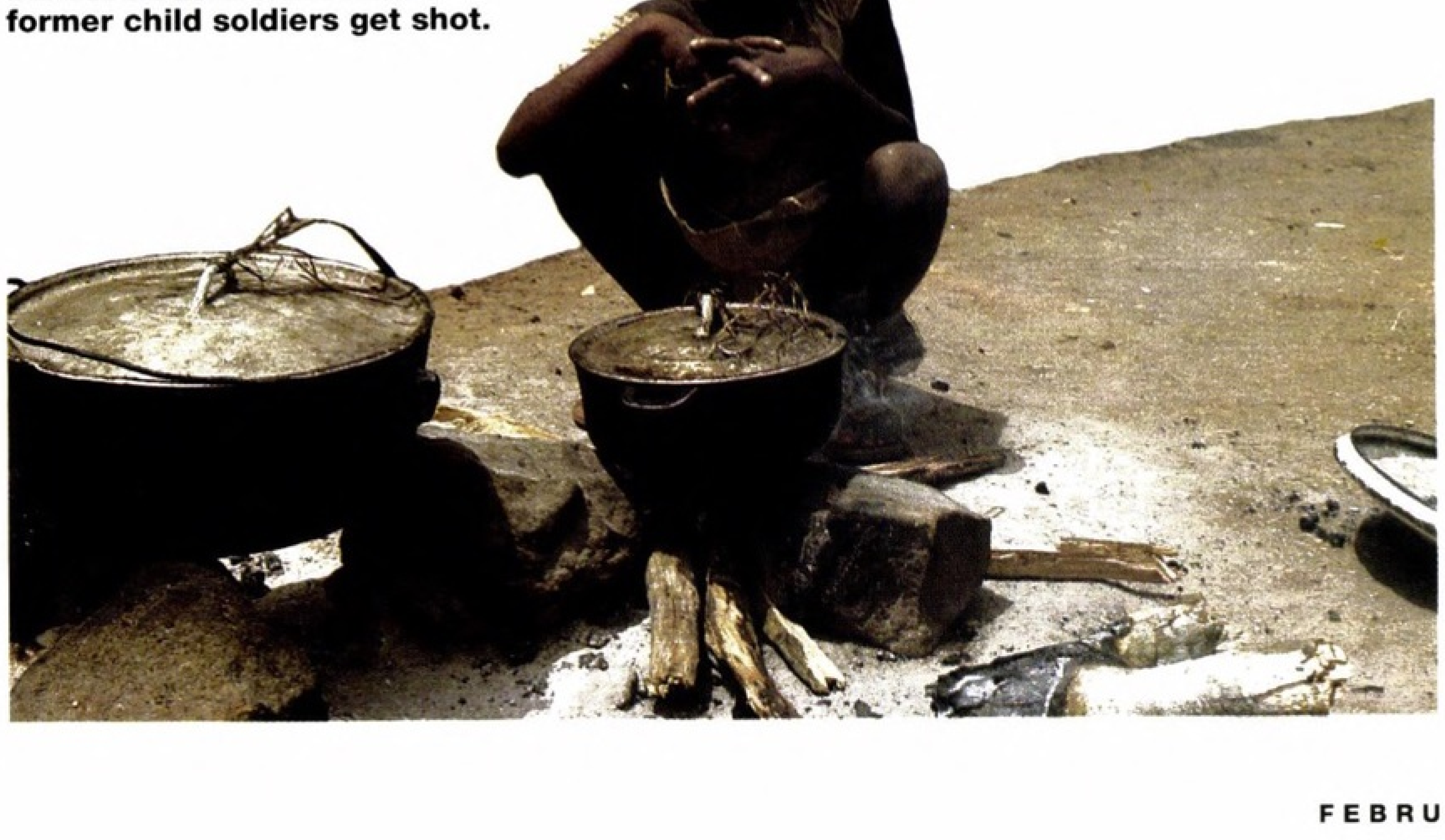
Now they have their own POW camp in Monrovia. The War Affected Children's Home was established in December 1992. A local non-governmental organization runs the home, offering counselling and education to the children and attempting to locate their families – difficult as this is with people escaping to other countries or hiding in remote parts.

The first of the children to arrive was a 13-year-old boy plagued by nightmares and covered in fungus, who surrendered because he was simply too tired to carry on fighting. Now there are 60 children between the ages of 9 and 16. Most were brought in malnourished, in rags, some with malaria, all traumatized, disturbed and confused.

The home has no electricity and, like the rest of Monrovia, no running water. Food and medical aid are provided by the United Nations Children's Fund. The home had planned to keep children for up to six months but Ecomog does not want any children released – even when families have been located. They say they can't have former soldiers running in the streets whom they cannot shoot because they are children. So the children's detention and schooling are indefinite.

Repeated attempts at a ceasefire have proved futile. An election has been scheduled for this month but seems unlikely to be held. ■

Theodore Liasi and Sharmilla Joshi / SOA



School's out in Monrovia: former child soldiers get shot.

T. LIASI / SOA

END

END Quote

'No force can now stop or even delay our emancipation from the pain and shame of our racist past.'

Judge Ismail Mohamed, who chaired negotiations for South Africa's new multiracial constitution.

Tango Feroz: Capturing the idealism of 1960s youth in Argentina.

film

Tango Feroz
by **Marcelo Pineyro**

Speak Up! It's So Dark
by **Suzanne Osten**

Blockade
by **Nettie Wilde**

I Wanted to See Angels
by **Sergei Bodrov**

The Saint of Fort Washington
by **Tim Hunter**

There are not many showcases for socially committed and Third World cinema – but Toronto's Festival of Festivals is consistent in providing screens for some excellent feature films which hopefully will make it beyond the narrow art house market. Here are four highlights:

Set in Buenos Aires in the late 1960s, **Tango Feroz** unfolds the dramatic tale of a rock singer who falls foul of a state soon to be engaged in the wholesale slaughter of Argentina's youth. Tango gets involved with rebellious students and a police chief who wants to make him 'sing'. He ends up incarcerated, first in prison then in a mental hospital, for his refusal to capitulate to authoritarian power and the record industry. Fast-paced, this film captures the idealism of 1960s youth in urban Latin America pitted against the looming power of the morbid state. As one police official ominously warns: 'You will learn – at least those of you who survive'.

Politics ☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆

Power and brutality are explored in a rather more intimate way in **Speak Up! It's So Dark** which homes in on the relationship between a neo-fascist skinhead and a Jewish therapist. They meet on Swedish train and the doctor becomes a source of both challenge and hope for the troubled skinhead. The stormy 'therapy' sessions in Suzanne Osten's film make for some pretty disturbing viewing, but what emerges is a brilliant portrait of the psychological mindset of those who serve the far right as cannon fodder.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆

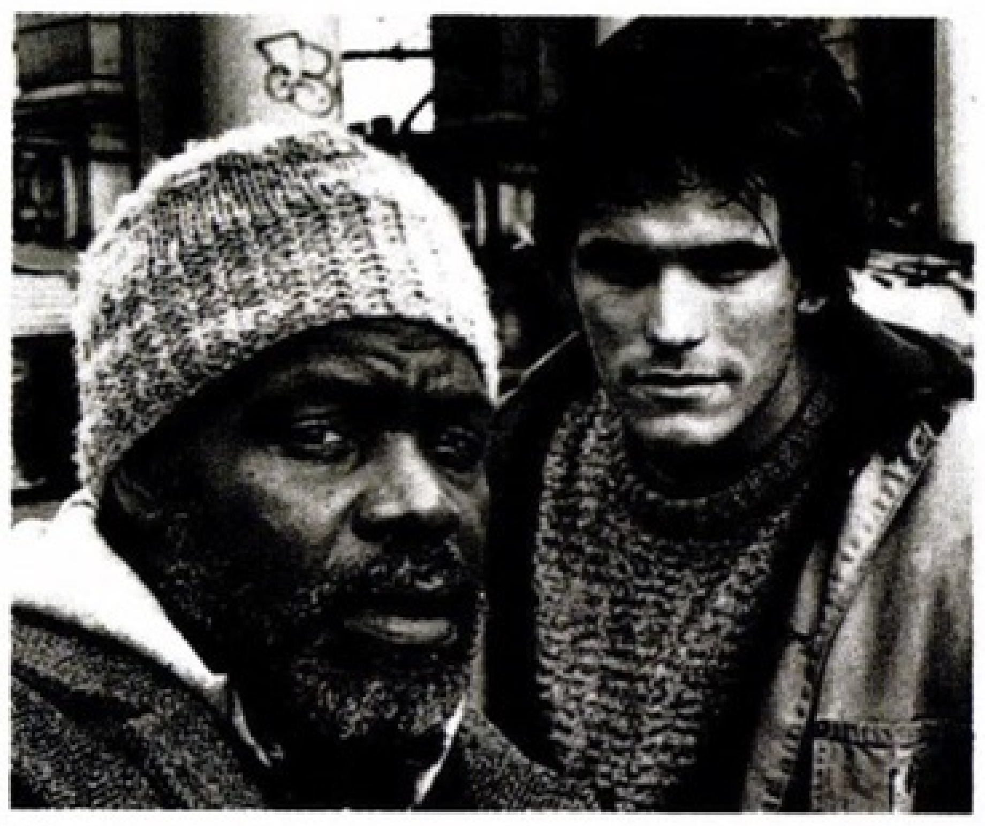
In the early 1990s Canadian native Americans launched direct action campaigns across the country to recover their rights. **Blockade** is a graphic case study of one such confrontation between the Gitksan people of northern British Colombia and the logging industry that is laying waste their land. Director Nettie Wilde does not try to simplify her story to add dramatic flair. She captures the frustration and the fear of the loggers who have earned their livelihood from the bush as well as the determination of the Gitksan to recover their land and culture.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆

In **I Wanted to See Angels** veteran Soviet director Sergei Bodrov eschews the traditional Russian sentimentalism that has marked his earlier films for a tough and uncompromising view of Yeltsin's Moscow. Bodrov lays bare the hardship and cynicism affecting the nation's youth that has accompanied the spread of predatory capitalism in Russia.

Politics ☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆

Finally, **The Saint of Fort Washington** renders the streets and single-men's hostels of New York in their full terror and beauty – and has the power to change the way homeless people are viewed. The hopes, fears and underlying humanity of the film's main characters – played by Danny Glover and Matt Dillon – are revealed as they struggle to survive in the tiny niches left after the ravages of the free market, more hindered than helped by cops and well-meaning social workers.



Hopes and fears on the streets of New York.

Politics ☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆

music

Beat the Border
by **Geoffrey Oryema** *(Real World/Virgin CDRW 37 – CD only)*

'At the age of seven,' says Geoffrey Oryema, 'I was struck by the musical disease'.

This is perhaps an odd way for the Ugandan musician and songwriter to describe his prodigious talents and compulsion to make music. But Oryema claims a line of poets and instrumentalists as his ancestors. He himself specialized on the *nanga* harp, *lukeme* thumb piano, flute and guitar. At college, he studied Stanislavian method acting and applied it to indigenous African forms.

Not surprisingly, a breadth of influences runs through all Oryema's music and this latest album, **Beat the Border,** is no exception. Sung half in Acholi, half in English, it manages to be traditional in an untraditional manner. The songs match African instruments with the studio effects of Bob Ezrin (a producer who counts Alice Cooper and Pink Floyd amongst his credits) and Peter Gabriel's long-standing engineer, David Botrill.

Oryema fled Uganda for Paris in 1977 after his father – a minister in Idi Amin's government – died in mysterious circumstances. After 10 years gigging in Paris, Oryema was invited to perform at The World of Art, Music and Dance (WOMAD) concerts. Contact with musical pioneers like Brian Eno, Gabriel and Daniel Lanois provided some of his most intriguing recent influences.

A quiet, beguiling quality haunts **Beat the Border's** ten songs, each possessing its own attentiveness to the moment. ***Market Day*** tells of a sister who spends the house-keeping money on cheap make-up. ***Lapwony***, about a teacher struck dead by lightning, describes the rain that follows and washes away the ink on his letter home.

Oryema is an observer, but his choice of events is not seen with a passive gaze. In ***Gang Deyo,*** on the theme of a fashion show, the percussion clicks away in imitation of the cameras. Like many of his songs it is about mutability – and the powerful impact of one culture upon another.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

Geoffrey Oryema: thriving on the musical disease.

books

The Critical Villager: Beyond Community Participation

by **Eric Dudley** *(Routledge ISBN 0-415-07344-8)*

Supporting 'development' seems more suspect than ever. Look at the large number of successes on paper which are in reality mediocre projects with little influence on people's lives; or arguments about the paternalism and implicit racism of aid.

Eric Dudley's book is enlightened and chastening as it charts a considered path through the problems related to aid intervention. His analysis is direct and he often asks the kinds of questions that get ignored because they seem too obvious. Building upon a well-focused critique of development he calls for greater honesty and an abandonment of the 'covert imposition of values behind the jargon of empowerment'. The aid worker, he says, should 'openly declare beliefs and argue for them'.

'The hazy principle that "the people" are always right is not only irrational, it is also patronizing. Respect is best shown for the villagers by treating them as consenting responsible adults with whom one can argue, disagree and negotiate.'

Many of Dudley's insights have the weight of experience behind them. Take his view that offering employment to villagers within projects makes a lot more sense than fashionable 'workshop' approaches. Or that articulate spokespersons are the greatest obstacles to communication because they attend every interview and 'explain' other people's views. Or his exposure of the more cynical motives behind producing development education materials: 'A booklet which is ostensibly aimed at semi-literate villagers is likely to find its way instead on to desks in Washington, university libraries in Europe...' Here is a sane and sure-footed guide through such hypocrisy.

Politics ☆☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆

STAR RATING

Excellent	☆☆☆☆☆
Very good	☆☆☆☆
Good	☆☆☆
Fair	☆☆
Poor	☆

Reviews editor: **Vanessa Baird**

THE *classic*

Arctic Dreams

... being the book that wedded science with poetry.

It is a common human trait to put things in pigeonholes, assigning each object, thought or feeling to the designated slot. Books are no exception. Novel, non-fiction, travel, autobiography – we feel happier if we have an exact fix on the book under consideration. Barry Lopez's **Arctic Dreams** frustrates such compartmentalized thinking. It is at once a natural history of the Arctic, a chronology of exploration, a hymn of praise to the flora and fauna that manage to survive in such unpromising conditions, and a chronicle of the time Lopez has spent in the Arctic. The book grew from a love of the landscape and the desire to explain and preserve its unique qualities. Lopez combines a poet's appreciation with the rigours of scientific method.

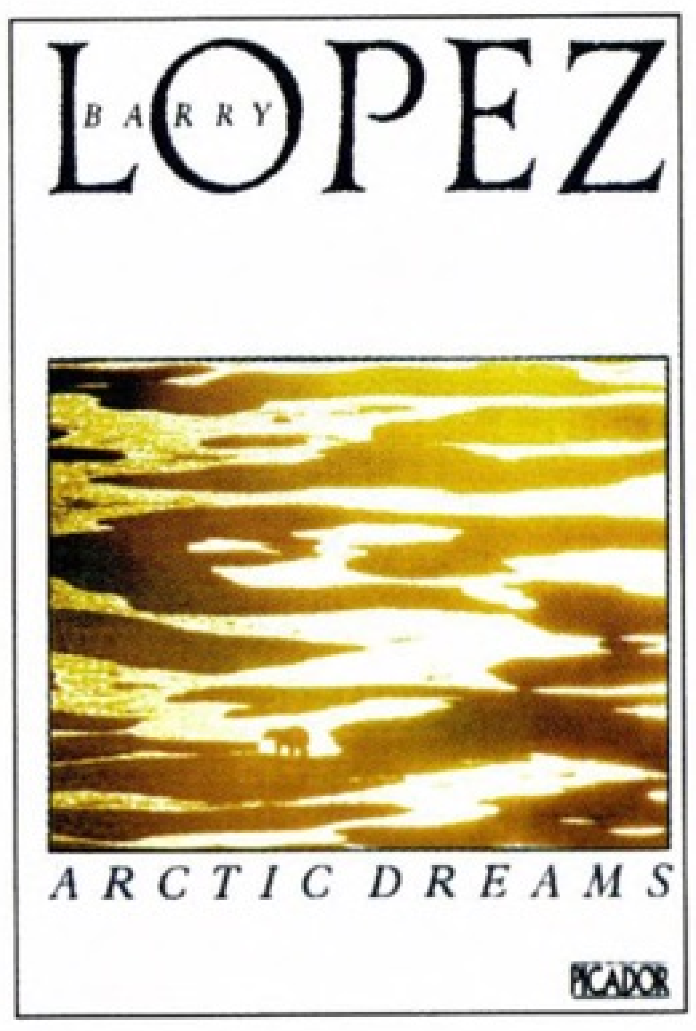
Following his previous book, *Of Wolves and Men*, Barry Lopez was drawn back to the Arctic and spent four years researching in the Sub-Polar regions, travelling on survey ships, living and working with geologists, palaeontologists and naturalists. In scope **Arctic Dreams** is a complete encyclopedia of the Arctic but it is much more than an arid recit-ation of the facts. The underlying philosophy is that the better we understand fragile environments such as the polar regions, the better equipped we are to fight their despoliation and destruction.

Also, an appreciation and respect for our environment reflects what we value and hold important in our own selves.

Lopez identifies three themes in his investigation of our habitat and our own lives: 'The influence of the arctic landscape on the human imagination. How the desire to put a landscape to use shapes our evaluation of it. And confronted by an unknown landscape, what happens to our sense of wealth. What does it mean to grow rich?' He does not pretend that these are simple questions or that they have definite answers. In Lopez's eyes, though, the altered perspective of a land that – unlike the temperate climates – cannot tolerate the slapdash husbandry that we grace with the names 'progress' and 'development' offers at once a challenge and a great opportunity.

The name we give this area derives from the Greek *arktikos*, 'country of the Great Bear'. Through much of history it was an unknown void. In myth it was transformed into a land of warmth and fertility out of which came fearsome enemies of civilization such as the Old Testament figures, Gog and Magog. More recent attempts to understand the Arctic have tried to pin down with scientific fact the metaphysical nature of the place; for instance, our idea of the 'Magnetic Pole', the 'Geomagnetic Pole', the 'Geographic Pole', the 'Pole of Inaccessibility', and the simple 'North Pole'.

Lopez offers a beautiful example of the ability of the Arctic always to slip beyond our ken. In 1597 the Dutch Willem Barents and his crew were forced to overwinter on the Siberian island of Novaya Zemlya. The darkness was as trying to them as the cold and, when the sun finally reappeared, 12 days earlier than they had calculated, they offered prayers of thanks for what they saw as divine intervention. In fact what they saw that far-off January was not the sun but a solar mirage; the actual sun was still five degrees below the horizon, its rays bent towards them by atmospheric refractions. A reminder that the universe is oddly hinged.



Examples of oddness and adaptability of life on earth abound in this book. Lopez devotes a chapter each to the joyous exploration of the way that polar bears, musk oxen and narwhals fit into their particular niche, how they thrive in conditions which are highly inimical to warm-blooded life, and how their interactions with humans – both indigenous hunters and newly arrived exploiters of resources – affect their chances of survival.

In a chapter called 'The Intent of Monks' Lopez discusses what it means to be a human being living and working in this environment. A passage that is at once dramatic and commonplace describes how he and a party of scientists were trapped by the drifting sea ice and the methodical way they found their way out of danger. When Lopez says: 'you accept the possibility of death in such situations, prepare for it, and then forget about it,' he is not being melodramatic, merely stating a truth. Such circumstances are conditions of work, not the reason for being there.

Arctic Dreams is a beautifully crafted work which lingers in the mind and reaffirms a faith in humanity; it speaks for our entire planet and our place in it, not merely the portion at the top we call Arctic. Indeed, the more Lopez understands the particular character of the Arctic ecosystem, the more his argument becomes a general one which applies to all environments, all people, in whatever circumstances.

Lopez ends as he began, with a profound gratitude to the land: 'I looked out over the Bering Sea and brought my hands folded to the breasts of my parka and bowed from the waist deeply towards the north, the great strait filled with life, the ice and the water. I bowed before the simple evidence of the moment in my life in a tangible place on earth that was beautiful... I was full of appreciation for all that I had seen.' ■

Peter Whittaker

***Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape** by Barry Lopez (Macmillan 1986, Picador 1990)*

QUESTIONS

...that have always intrigued you about the world will appear in this, your section, and be answered by other readers. Please address your answers and questions to 'Curiosities'.

TONY McDONOUGH / APF

Perhaps he suffers from PMT: a man's menstrual cycle is said to be more pronounced if he lives with a woman.

I've read that men have periodical physical cycles, though without the visible symptoms of female cycles. Can anyone tell me more, recommend any books or articles on the subject, or suggest how I might be able to calculate my cycle?

An Australian doctor called Margaret Henderson has researched this, but I cannot recall in which journals her papers were published. Anybody – male or female – can determine their cycle by taking their temperature at the same time every day for several months. When this is plotted on a graph a slight rise should appear every month. Cycles become synchronized through the emanation of pheronomes, thus a man will follow the cycle of the woman he lives with. But Henderson found that the cycle of cohabiting males was less pronounced.

Anne Burge
Rugby, UK

I've heard that it is possible to get a covenant cheque book, which can be used for gifts to charities and allows the recipient organization to get a full tax reclaim. Is this so?

Yes. In the UK the cheque books can be obtained from the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organizations, 18-19 Claremont Crescent, Edinburgh EH7 4QD (tel: 031 556 3882).

Elizabeth Ogilvie
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

The phrase 'the enemy within' was used by Margaret Thatcher to describe the miners during the British miners' strike of the mid-1980s. Was this phrase originated by her? If not, who was the first to use it?

Maggie's quote perhaps derives from a phrase used by poet George Meredith (1829-1909). He wrote:

'In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
We are betrayed by what is false within.'

WE Holloway
Shurdington, UK

I feel sure that Brigadier Frank Kitson wrote about 'the enemy within' in his book *Low Intensity Operations*, published about 20 years ago. In it he referred to British troops using the Northern Ireland situation as a training ground to combat the enemy within the mainland – that is, striking workers.

Bill Pritchard
Bradford, UK

AWAITING YOUR ANSWERS

Does anybody know in exactly which context the poet WB Yeats described the Anglo-American world and its culture as the 'filthy modern tide'?

Nicholas Fernandez
Romford, UK

Why are Australians called 'diggers'?

C Fraser
Halifax, UK

I liked your *In bed with...*(NI 249) but thought that the first person to say: 'There is no such thing as society' was Friedrich Hayek, not Margaret Thatcher. Can anyone confirm or deny this?

Janet Pearce
Uxbridge, UK

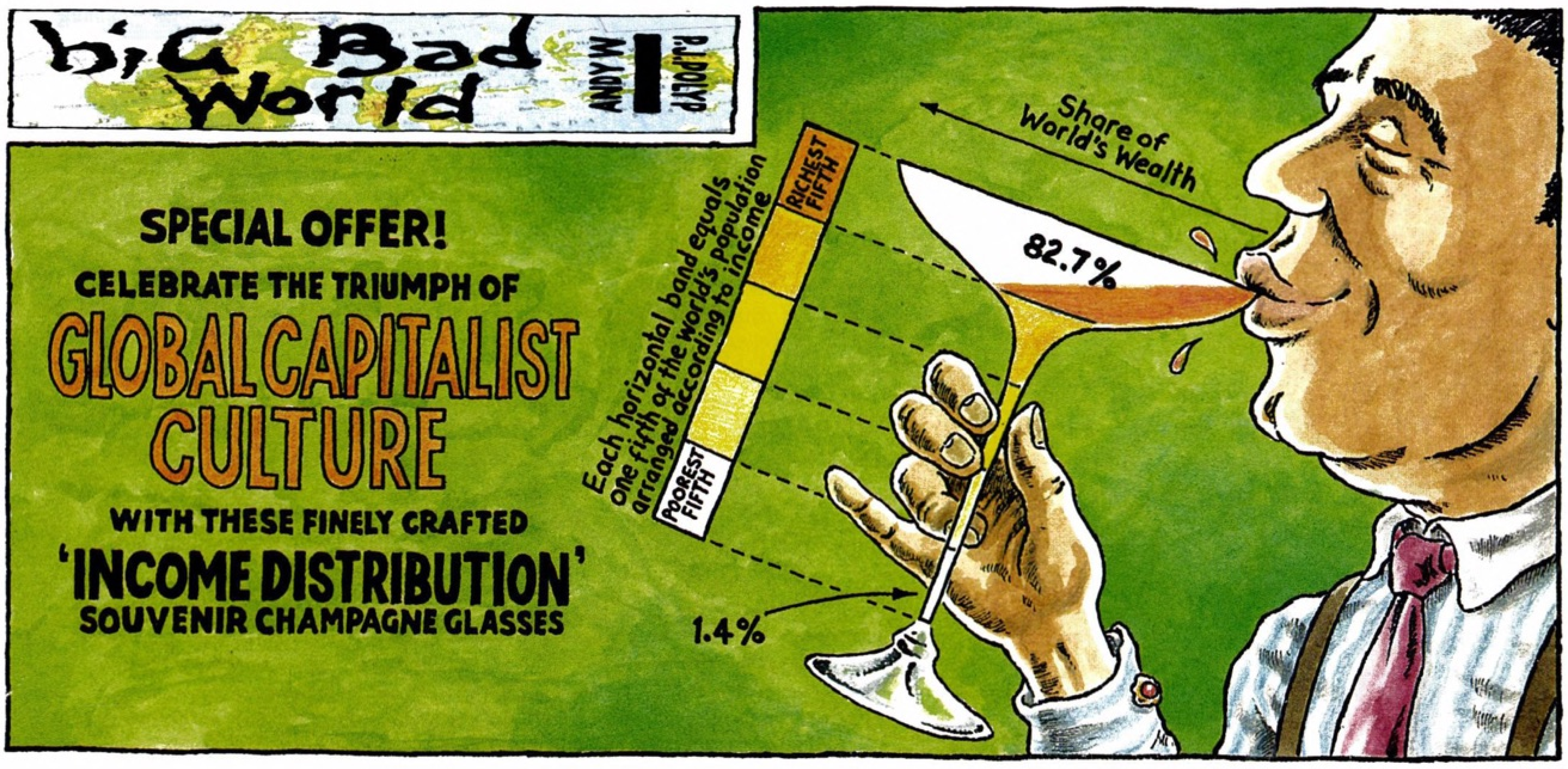
Is there an index on charity organizations which rates them according to political bias, bureaucracy, mismanagement, wastage, quality of information and the like?

Andrew Young
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Do cultures where characters are used instead of letters have an alphabet? And how do they use dictionaries?

Sarah Avison
Lutterworth, UK

If you have any questions or answers please send them to Curiosities, **New Internationalist, 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW, UK,** or to your local **NI** office (see inside front cover for addresses).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Jungle of snakes

***Paul Rogers** argues that we've not got long to rethink concepts of security and link them to the development agenda.*

'WE have slain the dragon but now live in a jungle full of poisonous snakes,' commented President Clinton's new Director of the CIA, James Wolsey, referring to the end of the Cold War and to the New World Order that has replaced it.

During the 45 years of the Cold War most of the 100 or more major conflicts in the world had an East/West dimension. But they were fought largely in the South, and most of the 20 million people killed and 50 million people injured were citizens of the South.

Now Western strategists are developing the view that the new threats to their security are likely to come from North/South confrontation. There are several reasons why they believe this. The world has divided into 'islands of wealth' floating in a sea of poverty – one-fifth of the world's people uses three-quarters of its wealth and physical resources. The population of the North is now stable, while in the South it is likely to grow for at least the next 60 years. So in 30 years time the wealthy minority will have been reduced to one-seventh of the total. A crisis of unsatisfied expectations will be hard to avoid.

We also seem to be approaching the limits of human activity set by environmental constraints. These limits result in intensifying competition for resources, and especially for those strategic resources such as oil, which are now found predominantly in the South. On occasions, as in the Gulf in 1991, the competition results in open warfare.

There is, finally, the legacy of worldwide militarization. This has left behind a massive array of weapons, postures and attitudes, many of them searching for fresh 'threats' to provide new military roles as budgets decline. The defence literature is rapidly filling with assessments of the new security risks – the threat from the global ghettos is just too good to ignore!

US Navy and Marine Corps analysts, for example, point to new tactics and weapons, notably the conventionally-armed Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missile which has been used repeatedly in the Gulf. The most recent version of this missile can be launched from submarines deployed hundreds of miles offshore and can target any point on 75 per cent of the earth's land surface. Almost all potential targets in the South can be hit.

There is little prospect of a move away from nuclear weapons as instruments of military strategy. Quite the reverse. A new strategy is likely to include the production of small, highly sophisticated nuclear weapons such as enhanced radiation systems for use against troop concentrations. The terms of reference of a Strategic Deterrence Study undertaken for US Strategic Air Command in 1990 refer specifically to a belief that 'the growing wealth of petro-nations and newly hegemonic powers is available to bullies and crazies, if they gain control, to wreak havoc on world tranquillity'. The study calls for 'a Nuclear Expeditionary Force... primarily for use against China or Third World targets'. These targets include potential nuclear powers such as North Korea, Algeria, Libya, Iran and, of course, Iraq.

The ideas being expressed on North/South nuclear confrontation are the most stark of the new strategies for controlling a 'crowded, glowering planet'. In essence they are all concerned with maintaining the status quo. But global security problems are not best approached from a military standpoint. Indeed, such an approach is almost certain to be thoroughly counter-productive.

Our difficult task is to confront this approach and to point to more fruitful responses. The process of militarization has to be reversed. Northern industrialized countries have to change their policies towards the South and ensure accelerated yet environmentally sustainable development. Development in the industrialized countries must itself be sustainable. There must be a change in international behaviour to ensure a rapid and effective response to any future threats to the global ecosystem.

These necessary changes are both radical and fundamental. They represent a near-total reordering of attitudes and would, over a period of years, involve a redistribution of wealth from North to South – a reversal of the pattern of the last several decades.

So there will be powerful opposition. Political systems usually want a return on political investment within five to ten years at the most. Planning to counter environmental degradation may show little positive return in one or even two decades. A degree of planning and co-ordination is required that runs counter to the broadly free market approach that dominated Western politics in the 1980s. The long-term effects of major environmental trends are difficult to predict with any kind of certainty, so it is easy to adopt best-case scenarios and avoid facing up to uncomfortable choices.

There will also be considerable costs for the wealthy industrialized states of the North, especially the Group of Seven – the US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. There are those who believe that the countries of the North have a legitimate international right to maintain their standards and styles of living, if need be by military force. Any attempt to redress inequalities will be seen as a threat to the security of the rich and powerful.

But the global system is too integrated and environmentally constrained to permit a minority of the population to live in secure isolation from the majority. Intellectual and practical efforts have been made during the past two decades to integrate our understanding of development and the environment.

But we also need to understand how international security processes work, and the dangers of applying them as an answer to North/South polarization. We have entered a period of transition in which great promise and human potential also carry the risk of instability, conflict and war on a near-global scale. The remaining years of this century may well be all that is available if we are to start the process of creating a peaceful alternative. ■

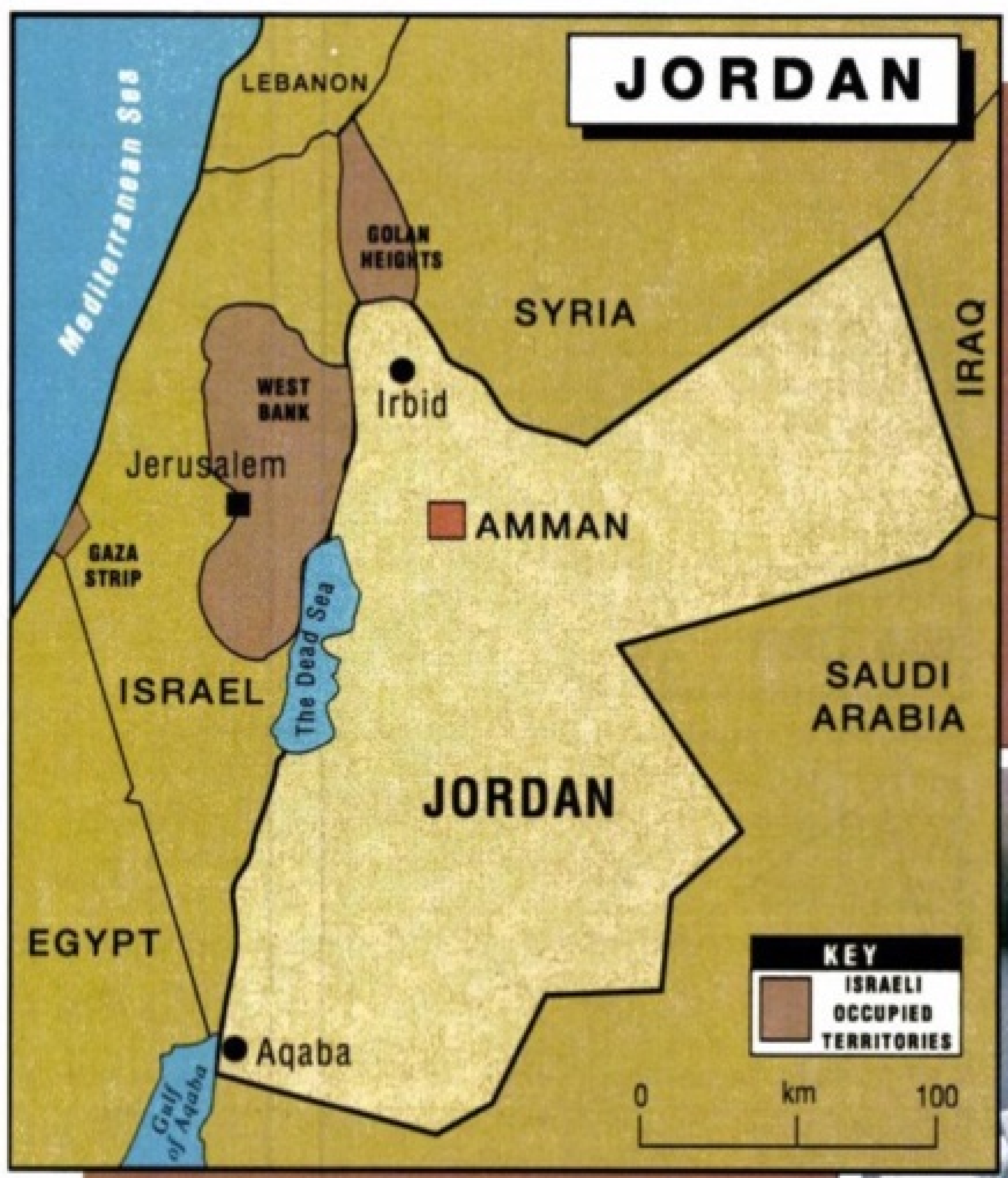
Paul Rogers is Professor of Conflict Analysis at Bradford University and a contributor to *A World Divided*, forthcoming from Earthscan.

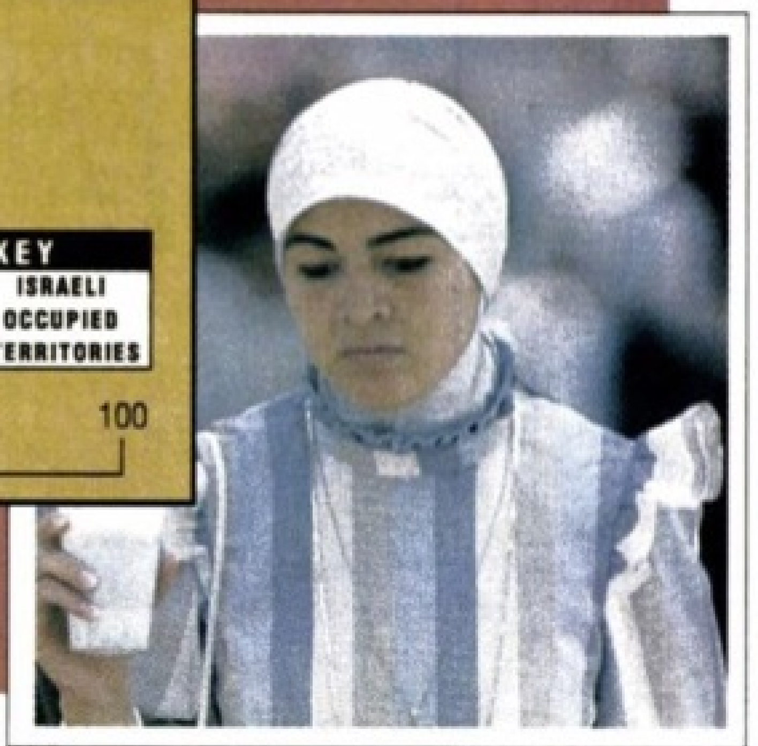
Jordan

CURRENTLY at the centre of the Middle East peace process, the desert kingdom of Jordan has during the past 40 years reflected the conservative but skilful leadership of its ruler, King Hussein.

The state of Jordan was created by the British after World War One. They plucked Hussein's grandfather out of present-day Saudi Arabia to lead the new nation and to ensure its allegiance to the colonial power. Jordan's role in more recent years has been one of conciliation rather than allegiance to one side or another.

This did not seem to be the case in 1970, when Jordanians perpetrated the 'Black September' massacre of Palestinians. But after the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 the King signalled a change of policy by re-establishing relations with the PLO. In 1979 he declined to endorse the Camp David Agreement between the US, Israel and Egypt but that excluded the Palestinians, and in 1985 he and the PLO's Yasser Arafat sealed their reconciliation by announcing a joint peace initiative. Hussein cancelled claims to the West Bank in 1988, which Jordan had annexed in 1948 and lost to Israel in the 1967 war.





GLENN HARVEY / CAMERA PRESS

On the domestic front, Jordan has made moves towards democracy – largely in response to rioting in the late 1980s against IMF-imposed price hikes and corruption among the élite. In November last year the first multi-party elections since 1956 were held and resulted in stronger conservative tribal blocks that will strengthen Hussein's hand in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Culturally, Jordan is considered to be more open than most other Arab countries. But although the country has made great efforts fighting disease, illiteracy and infant mortality, one-third of the population live in poverty. And with debt standing at seven billion dollars, state resources are often channelled towards repaying interest rather than meeting the needs of the people.

After the Gulf War Jordan lost its main trading partner in Iraq. The loss of around $800 million annually from remittances sent back by Jordanians in the Gulf also dealt a heavy blow. But the influx of returnees has contributed to a surge of new business investment.

Western foreign aid, suspended to punish Jordan for its pro-Iraq stand during the War, is trickling back. And Hussein retains international credibility for his diplomatic skills. Years of *de facto* Israeli-Jordanian peace look set to be formally recognized in a peace accord following the Israeli-Palestinian breakthrough last autumn. Hussein is seen by some as central to the success of this. Many Palestinians regard him as their protection from those who live on the East Bank and by that group as their safeguard against Jordan becoming Palestine. Hussein says that Jordan is a haven for all – provided, that is, they want to be Jordanians. Whether this legacy will live on once Hussein has gone remains to be seen. ■

Jill Hamburg

AT A glance

Excellent	★★★★★
Good	★★★★
Fair	★★★
Poor	★★
Appalling	★

POLITICS

National Charter legalizes political parties and spectrum of views.

LEFT RIGHT

1986 LEFT RIGHT

INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★

Large middle class prospers but many people live in poverty.

1986 ★★

LITERACY ★★★★

89% male
70% female

1986 ★★★★

SELF-RELIANCE ★★

Less dependent on foreign aid since the Gulf War.

1986 ★

FREEDOM ★★★

Civil society among the freest in the Arab world; some radical Muslims in prison.

1986 ★★

POSITION OF WOMEN ★★

Women visible in opposition to Gulf War; one woman MP. But traditional attitudes persist outside the cities.

1986 ★★

LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★★★

68 years *(US 76 years)* Lower in rural areas, and among indigenous population.

1986 ★★★★

Leader King Hussein Ibn Talal

Economy GNP per capita $1.050 *(US $22,240)*
Monetary unit: Jordanian dinar
Main Exports: Phosphates and potash
Most Jordanians work in agriculture, but potash, phosphates and allied industries are the most important domestic industrial sector.
Main Imports: Machinery, food, animals, oil and chemicals

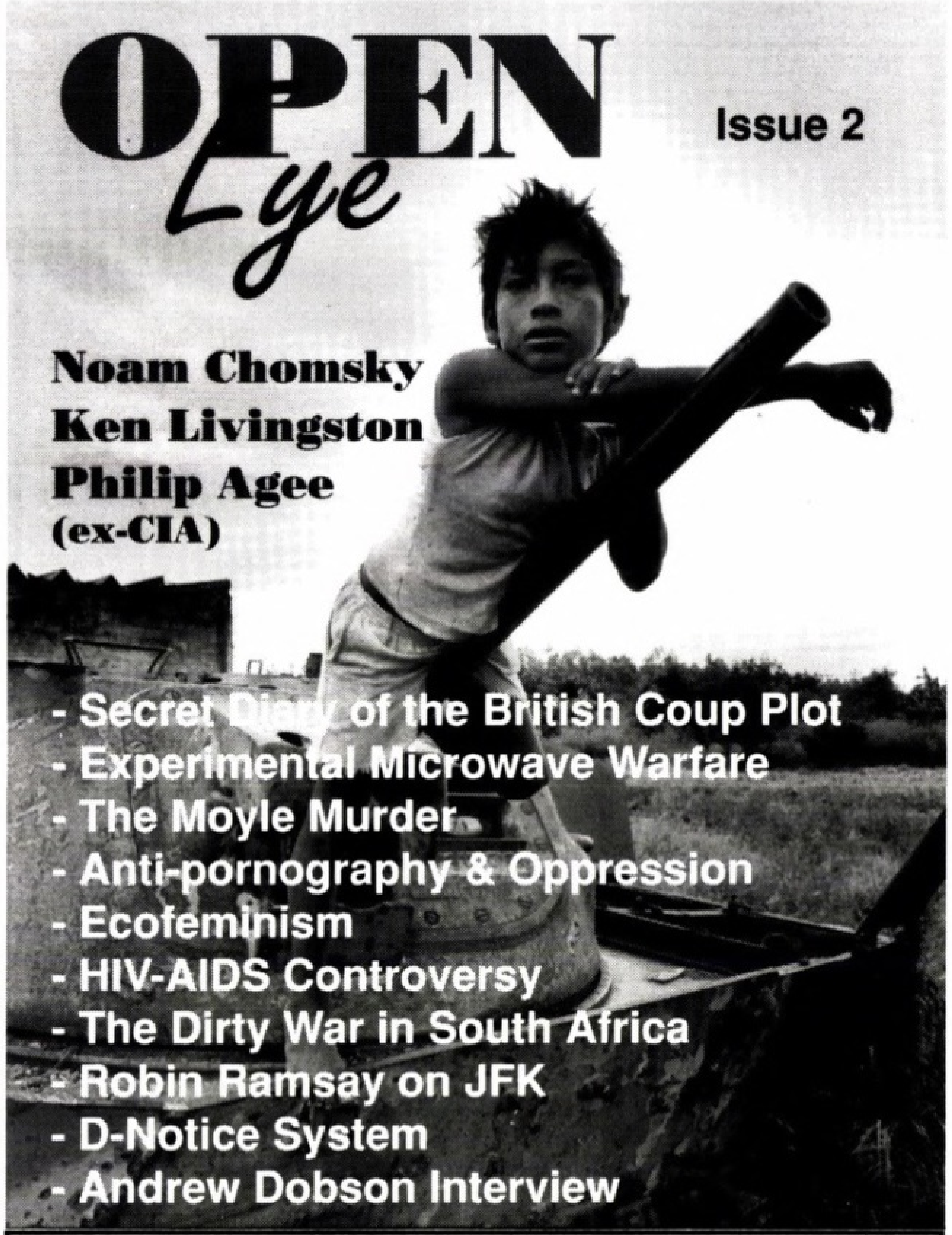
People 4.3 million

Health Infant mortality 25 per 1,000 live births *(US 9 per 1,000)*

Culture More than half of Jordanians are Palestinian Arabs. Of the others, known as East Bankers or Transjordanians, many are descendants of desert-dwelling Bedouin, similar to those of Saudi Arabia, the original home of the kingdom's ruling dynasty.
Religion: 80% Sunni Moslems, 20% Christians, a small number of Shi'ite Moslems.
Language: Arabic (official), English spoken by many.

***Sources.** Third World Guide 1993/4; The State of the World's Children 1994; World Bank Report 1992; The Middle East Review 1993/4; Middle East Economic Digest; Simon Edge; The Economist 6/11/93; The Independent 12/11/93.*

Last profiled in September 1986



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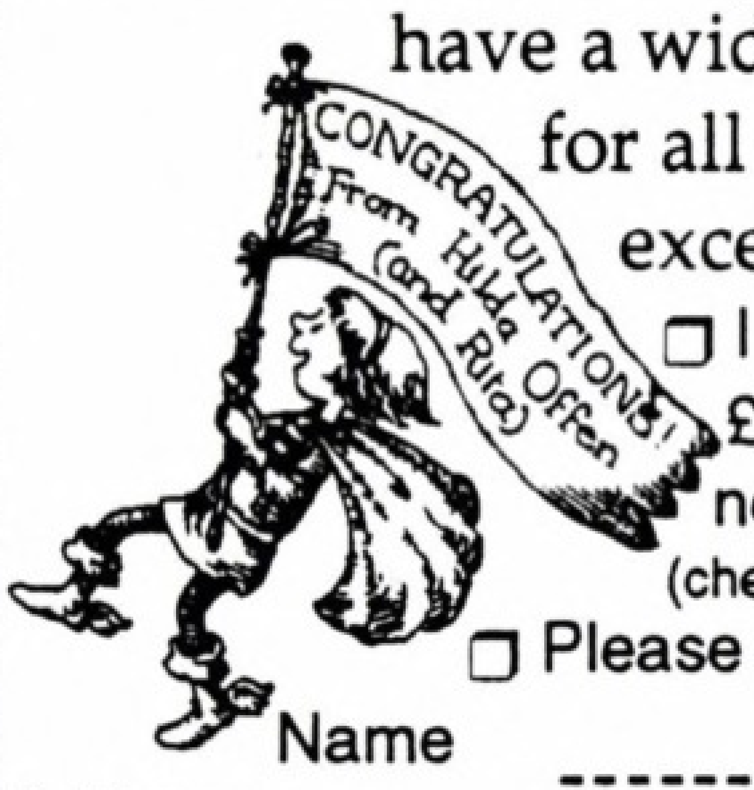
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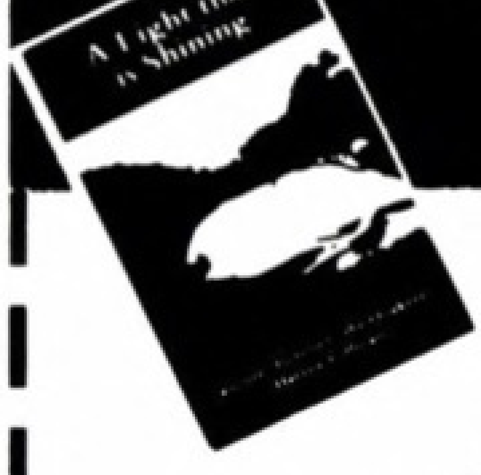

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